

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

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NEW YORK, MARCH 6, 1908.

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THE BRADYS AND THE "BLACK" POISONER; OR, STRANGE WORK IN PHILADELPHIA.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



It looked like a case of being too late, for Harry lay writhing on the couch. Old King Brady caught the black from behind and pulled him off the stool. "Harry!" screamed Alice. A groan was the only reply.

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PRICE 5 CENTS.

CHAPTER I.

FOR A YEAR, A MONTH, A WEEK AND A DAY.

It was New York City on a bleak day in the month of March.

The west wind came sweeping up Fifty-ninth street by the Ninth avenue station of the elevated, fresh from the mysterious regions across the Hudson River, which to the average New Yorker marks the end of the world.

The old gentleman in the long, blue coat, with brass buttons, nearly lost his big, broad-brimmed, white hat as he came down the elevated stairs and struck the street.

Jamming this antiquated tile more firmly on his head, he adjusted his old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar and took a look around.

"Not here!" he muttered. "Well, I will give him five minutes, and no more."

He looked at his watch and took his stand by the corner saloon.

A big man, wearing diamonds, came out and greeted him.

"How are you, Mr. Brady? Hope I see you well?" he said.

They shook hands and exchanged a few words.

The big man was the backer of a dozen saloons and poolrooms.

Thousands of New Yorkers would have considered it an honor to be thus greeted by him.

But the old man with the big, white hat wiped his hand on his handkerchief after the diamond-bedecked man had departed.

He knew the man as others did not know him, and knew that his wealth and power had come through robbery of the widow, the orphan and the poor.

To shake hands with such a man he considered a disgrace.

For it was the business of the man with the big hat to know things.

He was a detective.

Moreover, he was the world-famous Old King Brady, by long odds the best-known sleuth in America, whose acquaintance in New York City with all kinds and conditions of men can scarcely be equalled by any one alive.

The wind continued to blow, and the minutes flitted by.

Before the time limit was reached down the elevated steps came a trim, young fellow in his twenties, as up-to-date in his dress and general appearance as the old detective in said particulars was behind the age.

This was Young King Brady, late pupil, now full partner, in the Brady Detective Bureau, of Union Square, New York.

"Well, Harry," remarked Old King Brady, "you are ten minutes late. I was on the point of giving you up."

"Put it up to the elevated railroad and not to me," replied Young King Brady. "The train was delayed. But what is in the wind?"

"A Secret Service order received over the telephone from headquarters in Washington, shortly after you left this morning."

"So? And what about?"

"Remember Joe Curry?"

"The colored Secret Service man? Certainly."

"He is dying, they say. Somebody notified the chief anonymously. We are ordered to investigate."

"Yes. Where does he live?"

"Up here in the Sixties—San Juan Hill."

This peculiar name has attached itself to the largest of New York's several colored quarters, for some reason which we could never learn.

"I am sorry to hear that. Curry was a good man in his way. What do you suppose can have struck him?"

"I'm sure I don't know. I haven't seen him in almost a year. Let us get right around there and see."

They hurried to 6—th street.

Here, on the top floor of a low row of brick tenements, they found their man.

A frightened-looking colored woman admitted them.

"Yo'll be Ole King Brady?" she said, looking the old detective over.

"Yes, ma'am."

"I am so glad yo' have come. Job has been calling for yo'."

"Why didn't he send for me sooner? I got the order to call here by way of Washington, less than an hour ago. Are your Mrs. Curry?"

"Yes, sah. I'se his wife. He has been clean off his head, sah. I sent word to Mistah Clemens. I s'pose he tole de chief; but fo' de land sake! doan breve a word about Secret Service hyar, Mistah Brady. Dese niggers in dis house would kill me if dey knowed dat mah man has been a detective. Dat's what dey wud!"

"Rest quiet on that score, Mrs. Curry. Can I see Job now?"

"De doctah am wiv him, sah. I'se feared of dat man. Better wait a minute till he come out."

"What doctor is it?"

"Dunno him name, sah. Some doctah Mistah Clemens sent around."

"How long has Joe been this way?"

"Goin' on two weeks; he's been po'ly. Hit am fo' days since he tuk to him bed."

The Bradys waited.

Presently the doctor, a pompous, little man, came out of the front room.

He was a Dr. Devine, a well-known practitioner in the neighborhood, and Old King Brady addressed him by name.

"Oh! Ah, yes—Mr. Brady!" said the doctor. "I remember you very well. It is some time since we have met."

"Your patient, doctor. He is a man I feel an interest in. You are aware of his business, I presume?"

"Yes. Secret Service Commissioner Clemens informed me."

"What ails him?"

"It's a case of grip and general break-up. Oh, Mrs. Curry! Better go in to your husband now."

The woman passed into the other room.

"Going to die, doctor?" asked the old detective as soon as the door was closed.

"Sure thing!" replied the doctor. "His stomach is all gone; so are his kidneys. As for his liver—well, I hardly see how he has lived as long as he has."

"You have told the wife?"

"No; I shall tell her to-night."

"Can we see the patient?"

"Yes. He is expecting you. May as well go right in. Nothing can save him, but don't let him get excited or he may pop out while you are talking to him, which would be awkward. Good day!"

And Dr. Devine popped out himself then.

"How little they think of death, and yet they have to travel the same road as the rest of us," remarked the old detective.

"Any need of me going in?" questioned Harry. "I'm not anxious to interview a dying man."

"Remain here. I will call you if I want you," replied Old King Brady, and he knocked on the dividing door.

The woman answered.

"Can I see him now?" demanded the old detective.

"Sho'ly, Mistah Brady. He's waiting fo' yo'," was the reply.

Old King Brady passed in, and Mrs. Curry passed out. The room was comfortably and tastefully furnished.

Upon the bed lay a much-emaciated colored man, whose age must have been under forty.

His eyes were closed, and he was muttering to himself.

Old King Brady was amazed at the change which had come over this once active and robust man.

"Job!" he said, bending over the bed. "You wanted to see me, Job. I am here."

The eyes opened and a smile came over the face.

"Mr. Brady!"

"Here I am, Job."

A trembling hand came out from under the covers and grasped that of the old detective.

"T'ank yo'!" he said. "Yes, I want to see yo', Mr. Brady. I'se gwinter die."

"Don't give up hope, Job."

"Must. Listen! 'Tain't no use to do nuffin'. Dese yere doctahs dey doan know nuffin' 'bout my case. I'se hoodooed; dat's what's de mattah wiv me."

The man was plainly dying.

It was no time to argue against superstition, and Old King Brady chimed in with the idea.

"If you believe that, Job," he replied, "why don't you send for a voodoo doctor to break the spell?"

"I'se done it, Mr. Brady; I had one workin' over me all night long. Kaint do nuffin'. De spirit what's got aholt of me is too powerful fo' him. Only de nigger what set him onto me can take him away."

"Do you know who it is? Perhaps I can help."

"Dunno fo' suah. 'Tain't no use. Hit's too late. All come from a case I had among a bunch of Philadelphia niggers. I never been myself sence. But, never mind dat, as I'se got somet'ing to say to yo', who has always been good to me."

"Dear me! Job, I don't know that I ever did anything particular for you, my poor fellow! but I'd like to help you now, if I can."

"Kaint, boss. No sorter use. I'se clean done fo'. But looker hyar. I'se got an idea dat yo' may need mah help and dat befo' very long. Dat's why I done send for yo'."

"Let it come, Job. Don't be afraid to speak."

"Oh, I hain't got nuffin' mo' to say, but I'se gwine ter give you suffin' an' I want yer to keep it till you find yo'self in a tight place with niggers, den show it, and mebbe hit will save yo' life."

Still inclined to humor a dying man, Old King Brady thanked him.

Job felt under his pillow and drew out a small, wash-leather bag, much worn.

"Hit am in hyar, Mr. Brady," he said. "Fo' years I wear dis yere aroun' mah neck. Hit am no spell ob de debbil, and I won't tell yo' what hit am; but promise me yo' will keep hit about yo'-fo' a year, a month, a week an' a day?"

"I promise, Job," replied the old detective, accepting the bag.

"T'ank yo, boss! You was allus good to me. You want to know how? Well, I tell yer. Yo' allus treated me lak a man, dat's how. 'Tain't ebery white man what treats a nigger so, an' let me tell yer anoder t'ing. Niggers am lak children; an' yo' treat 'em right. You' specs too much of dem an' yo' doan treat 'em right. Dey's no better an' no wuss dan oder folks. Goodbye! I'se gwinter sleep!"

Old King Brady shook hands with the dying man again, and after a few sympathetic words withdrew, and, with Harry, left the house.

As they walked toward Ninth avenue the old detective related to his partner what had occurred.

"And what do you think? Is he really dying?" Harry asked.

"I don't think there is a doubt of it," was the reply.

"Of course, you take no stock in the hoodoo business?"

"Certainly not; but I do think he is a man poisoned."

"Why not see the doctor?"

"I shall call him over the 'phone and tell him my theory, but it is too late now to do anything. Just the same, after he is dead, which he will be before many hours, I shall see to it that there is a post-mortem and the case looked into. Job Curry has been a very useful man to the Secret Service Bureau, and it is a shame to have him pass out so."

"Have you looked into the bag?"

"No. We will do that when we get on the elevated train."

As they rode downtown Old King Brady opened the little, wash-leather bag, which he had promised the dying ducky to keep for a year, a month, a week and a day.

All it contained was a queer shaped black stone, highly polished on all sides but one, where it was rough and looked as though it had been broken off from a larger piece.

"Just a lucky stone," remarked Old King Brady; "but all the same I propose to be true to my promise and keep the thing for a year, a month, a week and a day."

CHAPTER II.

A QUAKER CITY CALL.

That night Job Curry died.

True to his determination, Old King Brady arranged for a post-mortem.

He personally assumed the expense of the funeral, and persuaded the widow to allow the remains to be removed to a private morgue, where, without her knowledge, the autopsy was to be performed.

By appointment with Dr. Devine, Old King Brady met him at the morgue half an hour before the time fixed for the autopsy.

The little doctor was quite cavalier about the appointment.

"You see I am here, Mr. Brady," he said, when the old detective entered. "And it is to my own great inconvenience that I have kept the appointment. What is it you wish?"

"To make a personal examination of this body in your presence, doctor," replied the old detective.

"Entirely unnecessary!" snapped Dr. Devine. "Permit me to say that I regard your theory of poison as absurd."

"Possibly, possibly. Have you practiced much among colored folks?"

"Very little. I only took up with this case to oblige Mr. Clemens."

"Just so. I, on the contrary, have had much to do with them, although not in a medical way. I believe the man to have been poisoned, and I say so frankly."

"But you are not a medical man."

"Hence my opinion is worthless. Granted. But, as I am putting up for this autopsy and propose to pay your fee, I am a man to be humored. I want you to make an examination of this corpse in my presence. For this bill me especially and I will promptly remit."

"Oh, very well," replied the doctor. "If you put it that way, of course, I haven't a word to say. Come. I understand the undertaker has the corpse on the operating table. We will make our examination now."

They entered the operating room.

Removing the sheet, Dr. Devine made his examination.

Certainly there was nothing to indicate poison about the remains.

"You see?" said the doctor, when he had finished. "Nothing but an examination of the stomach can prove or disprove your poison theory."

"And you see nothing unusual?" Old King Brady asked.

"Nothing whatever. Do you?"

"Yes."

"Indeed! Where? What?"

"I once saw a negro die in New Orleans under just these circumstances, doctor; and on this corpse I see just what the operating surgeon found in that case. He, as it happened, was familiar with the tricks of negro voodoo doctors, and knew what to look for."

"And I don't! Is that what you mean?"

Old King Brady bowed.

"Oh, very well. We'll admit that I don't know my business. Perhaps you will be good enough to explain what you mean."

"Very good. Look here."

The corpse of Job Curry lay face downward upon the table.

Old King Brady pointed to an inflamed, reddish bunch on the back of the left leg, well up toward the hip.

"What do you make of that?" he demanded.

"Beginning of a bad sore," replied Dr. Devine, promptly.

"Doctor, if you will take your lancet, and open that bunch you will find in it something looking very much like a small, hollow piece of bone. If you will carefully investigate you will also find that it is a piece of a mouse's legbone, and that it contains in the tiny hollow traces of a vegetable poison."

"You found such a thing in the leg of the corpse in New Orleans?"

"The surgeon who performed the autopsy did."

"But how could a man carry a thing around with him, and not know it?"

"Can't say. This man may have felt pain there without knowing the cause."

"He did complain of pain in his left leg."

"And you made an examination?"

"No."

"You told him it was rheumatic?"

"Yes."

"Make your examination now, doctor. There is no use in talking about this thing any longer. Just see if I am right or wrong."

Dr. Devine was evidently growing interested.

He produced his lancet and cut into the red bunch.

And, sure enough, from it he took a tiny piece of bone. It was not a splinter, but perfectly round and hollow, although the opening through it was most minute.

"You have certainly proved your point in part, Mr. Brady," he said. "But there could hardly be poison enough in this thing to kill a man."

"How long would a man live who touched his tongue to a vial of prussic acid?" retorted the old detective.

"Well, you have me there. He would drop dead on the spot, of course."

"Thus there are poisons and poisons. Analysis will show. Are you anatomist enough to pronounce on the bone?"

"No, but Dr. Parker, who is to attend here, is."
 "I will wait for Dr. Parker and then withdraw."

At the appointed time the doctor arrived.

Dr. Devine was perfectly fair about the matter.

He told of Old King Brady's theory, explained how it had been borne out, and exhibited the fragment of bone.

Dr. Parker at once pronounced it part of the legbone of a mouse.

"This is very interesting!" he declared. "I shall take particular pleasure in analyzing this bone; but, Mr. Brady, can you give me any clew to the nature of the poison you suspect it contained?"

"Unfortunately I cannot," replied the old detective. "The doctor in New Orleans who supplied me with this information named it at the time, and stated that it was known only to colored voodoo doctors or priests. I have forgotten what he called it."

"If you will give me his address I will write him," said Dr. Parker. "I am deeply interested in this."

"I wish I could give you his address," replied Old King Brady; "but, unfortunately, the man is dead."

Old King Brady now withdrew and waited nearly a weekly before he knew the result of the analysis of that tiny bone.

But the report of the autopsy came promptly.

No trace of poison was found in the stomach of Job Curry.

At last came the report of the analysis.

Dr. Parker stated that he found that Old King Brady was right.

The bone contained a powerful, but slow-acting, vegetable poison, for which he could find no name.

Such were the circumstances attending the death of the colored Secret Service man.

The months passed, and by all but Old King Brady the matter was forgotten.

March came around again, and on the anniversary of the day of Job Curry's death the Bradys received a Secret Service order to go over to Philadelphia, and take up a case.

It was Miss Alice Montgomery, the accomplished female partner of the Brady Detective Bureau, who received the order.

This was in the early morning at the office.

As it happened, Old King Brady was late that morning.

When he came in Alice waited upon him in his private office.

"Orders for Philadelphia, Mr. Brady," she said.

"Well," demanded the old detective, "and what about that?"

"Remember the case of Dr. J. K. Hough, whose death was reported in the paper some days ago?"

"Yes."

"It seems that Dr. Hough was an expert chemist and has done a great deal of work for the Secret Service Bureau. Orders are that we go over to Philadelphia at once and take up the case. There are suspicious circumstances. Poison is suggested."

And this was the errand which took the famous detectives to the Quaker City that cold, March day.

They took rooms at their usual hotel, the Bingham House.

Although it was late in the day when they arrived, they proceeded directly to the house of the dead Dr. Hough, on Walnut street.

Here they were received by a young man, who introduced himself as Dr. Hough's assistant, Dr. Watson.

He was a small, insignificant-looking man, with tow-colored hair, watery-blue eyes, and a blonde mustache.

He received the detectives cordially and conducted them at once into the private office.

"I have been expecting you," he said. "The chief of the Secret Service notified me to look out for you to-day. That is why I have remained in."

"We propose to take right hold of this matter, doctor," replied Old King Brady, as they seated themselves. "We want to know all about it; but, first, tell me, are you Dr. Hough's successor?"

"Well, I suppose I may be so called," replied Dr. Watson, modestly; "but I can never hope to fill his place. Dr. Hough was one of the most expert chemists in America. His death is a great loss to the profession, and——"

"Does he leave a family?" broke in Old King Brady, who had already taken one of his violent prejudices against this young man.

"No. The doctor was a bachelor," was the reply.

"What was his age?"

"Fifty-two and some months."

"You two occupy this big house alone?"

"With a colored servant, yes. But I was going to tell you about it."

"Excuse me, doctor; but you have your way of getting at a medical case, and I mine at a detective case. My way is to ask questions."

"So is mine," replied Dr. Watson, with a laugh. "I must confess I seldom give the patient a chance to tell his own story. If I did I should never get through. Go ahead!"

"Name of this colored servant?"

"Sam Johnson."

"He did all the work?"

"Everything. The doctor rented the upper rooms. We only occupied this floor and the basement."

"Johnson here now?"

"No. On the night of the doctor's death in the confusion he broke open that desk over there, stole a thousand dollars and skipped out. We have not been able to trace him since."

"How long had he been in the doctor's employ?"

"About a year."

"Had he always been honest up to that time?"

"Yes; we had no fault to find with him. He was a most excellent servant and a splendid cook."

"Did he steal anything else?"

"Not that I know of."

"Who discovered the robbery?"

"I did."

"Now, about the doctor. Of what did he die?"

"A general break-up."

"Describe his symptoms."

Dr. Watson did so in detail.

Enough to say that Old King Brady mentally noted

their strong resemblance to those of Job Curry, the dead negro Secret Service man.

The doctor had been sick two weeks.

His case was believed to be grip.

Then his stomach gave way, and his kidneys and his liver were found to be disordered. He wasted away and died.

"Was there a post-mortem held, Dr. Watson?" Old King Brady asked.

"No," was the reply. "It was not considered necessary."

"Who was the attending physician?"

"I was. I had three of the best doctors in Philadelphia in consultation toward the end."

"Was Sam Johnson in attendance on the doctor?"

"Yes; up to the hour of his death."

"At what hour did he die?"

"Five-ten, p. m."

"And when was the robbery discovered?"

"The next morning."

"What proof have you that Johnson was the thief?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, none at all, except that he was missing."

"And you turned the matter over to the police?"

"Yes."

"How do you know that Dr. Hough actually had a thousand dollars in that desk?"

"Why, I put it there myself, Mr. Brady. Three persons called that afternoon and paid their bills. The amounts totalled exactly one thousand. It was too late to go to the bank, so I put the money in the desk."

"You have no safe?"

"No."

"Did Johnson know the money was there?"

"I don't know whether he did or not."

"How was the desk opened?"

"Pried open with our chisel, which was found on the floor. You can see for yourself."

"No matter. Now, doctor, I am about at the end of this examination. Who laid Dr. Hough out?"

"The undertaker and myself."

"Did you observe upon any part of his body a red bunch, somewhat inflamed?"

Harry and Alice were following all this attentively, but neither of them knew what the old detective was driving at.

Old King Brady is never a man to tell all his business.

He had made no mention to either of his partners of the later developments in the Curry case.

Dr. Watson began to pay attention.

"Why, yes; there was such a bunch," he said.

"On the back of the left leg?"

"Right."

"What did you think of it?"

"Why, I did not think much about it, anyway. I suppose I regarded it as the beginning of a bad sore."

"That is enough," said Old King Brady; "but who suggested poison in this case?"

"That came from an anonymous letter written to the Secret Service Bureau."

"Indeed! And who has the letter?"

"I don't know. I was notified to-day by the Secret

Service Commissioner that such a letter had been received, and that you would call."

"And do you believe that Dr. Hough was poisoned?"

"I can't imagine that it can be true," replied Dr. Watson, emphatically. "I believe he died of a general break-up, following grip."

"You are probably wrong," said the detective, leaning back in his chair.

"And you think he was poisoned?"

"Yes," replied Old King Brady. "Poisoned, beyond a doubt!"

CHAPTER III.

A DOCTOR OF A DIFFERENT SORT.

Dr. Watson got up and began nervously pacing the floor.

"I don't understand what you base your conclusions upon," he said. "Here you jump in, ten days after this man is buried, and positively assert that he was poisoned. How can you possibly know?"

"How do you judge of cases, doctor? By symptoms tallying with previous cases recorded in your memory and in the medical books you have studied. I as a detective do the same."

"And what agent do you imagine was employed? What has the red bunch on the leg to do with it?"

"The agent is unknown to me. The poisoner I believe to be a colored person. I assure you that if Dr. Hough's remains can be disinterred and that bunch opened there will be found in it a fragment of bone, which, if pulverized and the powder analyzed, will be found to contain a powerful vegetable poison not named in your medical books."

Dr. Watson turned white.

He reeled slightly and put his hand upon the table to steady himself.

But this passed on the instant.

Not unobserved by the Bradys, however.

There was not a quaver in Dr. Watson's voice when he replied:

"So? And you have personally seen such a case?"

"Yes; two of them."

"Let me understand you definitely. Do you mean to assert that Dr. Hough has fallen a victim to colored voodoo practices?"

"I believe such to be the case."

"Then let me tell you that you will find few persons in Philadelphia who will entertain such an idea. The proposition is absolutely absurd."

"We will not discuss it. I am here to solve the mystery of this man's death."

"But there is no mystery about it. The doctor died of the after-effects of grip, which has been very prevalent this winter, and has carried away many people."

"Was the doctor buried?"

"Why, no. The remains are in a receiving vault at Laurel Hill Cemetery."

"Why was he not buried?"

"He owned no lot."

"How much property did Dr. Hough leave?"

"About a hundred thousand dollars, I believe."

"Who inherits?"

"A Mr. Randall Ricketts, a nephew."

"Sister's son?"

"Yes."

"Doctor left a will?"

"No will. Mr. Ricketts is next of kin."

"Where does he reside?"

"Honolulu, Sandwich Islands."

"Has he been heard from since his uncle's death?"

"Yes; I cabled him, and he answered that he would start for Philadelphia by the first steamer."

"Meanwhile who has the doctor's property in charge?"

"Well, I have, I suppose."

"Who was his lawyer?"

"He never had any. He detested lawyers."

"Of what does this property consist?"

"Of this house and a business building on Chestnut street."

"Valued at what?"

"About a hundred thousand. It has a rent roll of upwards of \$5,000 a year."

"And the practice?"

"Well, that has a value, I suppose."

"You intend to carry it on, as his successor?"

"Why, yes; unless Mr. Ricketts decides to sell the good will and can find a purchaser."

"Just give me the names and addresses of the two consulting physicians."

Dr. Watson did so, and Old King Brady and his partners then withdrew.

Before they left Dr. Watson asked particularly what they proposed to do, but Old King Brady told him bluntly that he had formed no decision.

When they were well away from the house the old detective halted.

"Harry and Alice," he said, "what do you think of that fellow?"

"Decidedly a suspicious character," replied Harry.

"You scared him half to death," added Alice.

"And, believe me, he was not scared without reason," replied the old detective. "His whole manner was most suspicious. I doubt the truth of every word he said. He should be shadowed right now. If there is any one standing in with him in this plot, if it is a plot, he will lose no time in communicating with them."

"I'm on the job," replied Harry.

"Make a disguise and get back there—quick! Don't lose sight of that house until midnight at least, unless you shadow the man."

Young King Brady slipped around the corner and stood by a fence surrounding a private garden.

Here he made one of his quick changes and turned the corner again, quite a different-looking person.

"That will do," Old King Brady said to him by a secret sign, and he and Alice walked away.

"Where are you going?" demanded Alice.

"To see this Dr. Giverson, perhaps."

"One of the names Dr. Watson gave you?"

"Yes."

"You surprised both Harry and myself by your knowledge of voodoo methods."

Old King Brady told about the Curry case.

"I should have explained to Harry," he said, "and I am sorry now that I did not."

"Aren't you going to report at the Secret Service Commissioner's office?"

"Not to-night. I am not particularly in harmony with the present commissioner here in Philadelphia. My orders are from Washington. I may not report at all."

"If you are right in your suspicions you can't act too quickly."

"Quite so."

"I almost wonder that you told Dr. Watson as much as you did."

"Alice, it was a mistake. Of that there is no doubt. But I did not suspect the man at first. And, after all, perhaps it is just as well, for it will start things moving. I'm going to Dr. Giverson. He is a well-known practitioner here in Philadelphia and a person to be fully relied upon. Dr. Watson's story should be at once contradicted or confirmed."

"Where is his place?"

"Right here on Walnut street. I forget the number, but we shall come to it in a minute. I met the man before, some years ago. I am inclined to think he will know me. Ha! Here is the house now."

Dr. Giverson lived in one of those grand, old mansions which in early times were the pride of Walnut street.

There was a garden in front of the house, which stood well back from the street, and the doctor's name was on a huge brass plate attached to the gate.

Old King Brady looked at his watch.

It was half-past seven o'clock.

"We should find him in," said the old detective, opening the gate.

He was right.

Dr. Giverson was not only in, but alone.

He remembered Old King Brady instantly, and, taking him and Alice into his private office, placed himself at their disposal.

"We are here by the order of the Secret Service Bureau to investigate the death of Dr. Hough," began Old King Brady. "I understand that you were called on the case?"

"Why, not until the last minute," replied Dr. Giverson. "Are there any suspicions that his death was irregular?"

Old King Brady told of the anonymous letter.

"Ha!" exclaimed the doctor. "Poison, eh? Well, well!"

He was an old man, and his manner was somewhat abrupt.

"You doubt it?" replied Old King Brady.

"I know nothing about it. Hough and I were not particularly friendly. I was called just as he was dying. He was entirely unconscious. All I did was to examine his heart and announce that his case was hopeless."

"Who called you in?"

"Dr. Watson."

"A Dr. Skinner was also called in consultation?"

"Was, eh? Well, I didn't know. Watson did not

mention him. The fact is, Mr. Brady, I like Dr. Watson even less than I liked Dr. Hough."

"What was the trouble with Dr. Hough?"

"What did he die of, do you mean?"

"I didn't mean that, but what do you think he died of?"

"Don't know."

"Watson claims grip."

"That covers a great deal of ground. You ask what was the trouble with Dr. Hough, and I answer that he was a selfish eccentric, who was always distasteful to me."

"You knew him long?"

"Nearly all my life. We were students together. He hated me. I despised him."

"Was he crooked?"

"Oh, I will not say that. He was a skillful chemist; his practice amounted to little."

"And his family?"

"He never married. I understand his relatives are all dead."

"All but a nephew, named Ricketts, who lives in the Sandwich Islands."

"That would be his sister Susie's son. I understood that he was dead."

"Watson says he is living in Honolulu."

"He may be. He was a bad egg; robbed his employers and ran away. I heard he died in Chicago some years ago, but it may not be so. But about this poison business—it is a pretty slim clew, an anonymous letter, don't you think so?"

"I haven't seen the letter, so I can't say; but I have something else to go by. Listen! I am going to dip into a line of thought which will probably seem very absurd to you, but——"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Brady. I am a travelled man, and I flatter myself that I hold broad views. Let us hear your absurdity. If it appeals to you it may also appeal to me."

And Old King Brady went ahead and propounded his voodoo poisoning theory.

Dr. Giverson listened to every word he had to say with close attention.

"And that is what you are trying to build up a case on?" he said, when at length the old detective ceased to speak.

"That is it. As I said, you doubtless consider it very absurd."

"You are entirely mistaken," replied Dr. Giverson. "Listen, Mr. Brady! When I was a young man, away back in the fifties, my health gave out. I had just taken my medical degree, and I decided to go to Hayti, where I had a distant relative, who was engaged in the banking and export business. I accordingly went to Port-au-Prince and began practice there. I learned many things during my residence there, and, among others, something of voodooism. In the presence of this young lady I don't propose to go into details; but this much I will say, the Haytian voodoo priests are the most skillful poisoners in the world. I have seen a number of just such cases as you describe. Had I been called sooner and been allowed to examine Jack Hough, I could perhaps have saved his life. But, to imagine Haytian voodoo prac-

tices being carried on here in Philadelphia seems rather far fetched."

"Curry distinctly told me that he came by his end through mixing up with a lot of Philadelphia niggers, as he expressed it. But, tell me, doctor, how do they introduce this poisoned bone into the bodies of their victims unsuspected?"

"You ask me too much. I haven't the faintest idea. It must be that they drug them and do it while they are unconscious."

"Dr. Hough had a negro servant. According to Watson, he stole a thousand dollars on the night of the doctor's death and disappeared."

Dr. Giverson remained silent for some minutes, lost in thought.

"Mr. Brady," he then said, "I know something of your record. I suppose what you would like, more than anything else, would be to examine Dr. Hough's remains with me?"

"That is just it, doctor; but it should be done right now—to-night—before Dr. Watson can get in his fine work, if he is disposed to. Of course, I don't pretend to accuse the man of having a hand in Dr. Hough's death, but I do say his manner was very suspicious to me."

"He is a sort of person I cannot abide. I quite agree with you. Well, Mr. Brady, I was up all last night with a case, and I intended to retire early to-night, but to oblige you—and myself also, for you have aroused my curiosity—I will see what we can do."

Thus saying, Dr. Giverson picked up his desk telephone.

"Give me 1—8—5—6 Broad!" he called.

In a minute the bell tinkled.

"That you, Fleming?" called the doctor. "Say, for a special reason, to be explained when we meet, I want to have a look at the corpse of Dr. Hough in the receiving vault at Laurel Hill Cemetery to-night. Don't say impossible. Call up the superintendent. Tell him it is a case of must, and let me know his answer just as soon as you can."

Dr. Giverson hung up the receiver.

"Now we shall see," he said.

"You are the sort of person I like to work with, doctor," replied Old King Brady. "I wish there were more of your kind."

CHAPTER IV.

TRAILED TO THE DENSLAW TAVERN.

Shadowing a house on a cold, March evening is by no means a pleasant task.

Secretly, although he has never said so to his chief, Young King Brady hates shadowing.

It is not so bad after you once get on the move, but to watch a house is necessarily a very tedious affair.

But Harry's wait that night was not a long one.

Indeed, he had every reason to congratulate himself he had lost no time, for he had not been ten minutes on the job when Dr. Watson came out of the house, wrapped

in an ulster and carrying a small, well-worn grip in his hand.

It looked very much as if the doctor was going on a journey.

The first thing he did was to look warily up and down the street, and Harry would undoubtedly have been caught napping if he had not taken the precaution at the start to slip up an alley, which, fortunately, gave him an opportunity to watch unobserved.

Apparently satisfied that he was not being shadowed, Dr. Watson started down Walnut street on a brisk walk.

Of course, Young King Brady was right on the job.

He trailed his man to Arch street, and then along Arch to Delaware avenue.

Following the water front down for several blocks, the doctor plunged into a maze of narrow alleys.

Here shadowing was comparatively easy.

Harry soon discovered that he was in a colored quarter.

Suddenly the doctor stopped before a little, two-story house and rapped smartly on the door.

A young colored woman answered, and there was a brief parley, after which the doctor was admitted.

From the corner of another alley Young King Brady watched that door for over half an hour.

At last it opened, and the doctor appeared, with a tall, slim, colored man, whose face was the blackest Harry had ever seen.

They stood for a minute, talking, and loud enough to be heard.

But they were speaking French.

Harry understands French, but not the sort these men spoke.

It was some barbarous dialect.

Perfectly familiar with the French-Canadian patois, Harry knew that this was different.

He at once assumed that it must either be Louisiana French or some West Indian dialect.

He was inclined to the latter theory, for in New Orleans the colored people who speak French, and there are many such, speak nearer a pure language than when they tackle English.

But of this Harry could make nothing.

For a few minutes the conversation lasted, and then Dr. Watson hurried away, the black man turning within the house.

Young King Brady had seen enough to make him ready to write the man down a crook.

"Something wrong with him; something wrong, sure," he said to himself. "Where can he be going at this hour?"

It occurred to him that the man might be intending to run away.

He was confirmed in his opinion when his shadowing led him to the Camden Ferry.

They crossed the Delaware, and Harry saw his man buy a ticket for Medford, N. J.

Harry immediately did the same.

Consulting a railroad guide, he found that Medford was on a branch line of the road, leading to Tom's River, and that it lay on the edge of the well-known Jersey

Pine Barrens, a stretch of country covering many square miles.

This was a region into which, as it happened, Harry had never penetrated.

But he knew all about it.

Here, within an hour's ride from Philadelphia, one finds a section as utterly wild as it was in the days of William Penn.

The soil is worthless, and hence there has been no inducement to open the place up.

But there are still inhabitants—basket makers, makers of barrel hoops, and similar things.

These people are of the lowest and most ignorant description.

In some sections of the Pine Barrens they are positively dangerous, and not a few disappearances of people who have ventured into these wilds have been recorded.

Several roads cross the region, which in the days of stage coach travel were in constant use, but are now almost, if not quite, abandoned.

"What can he be going to Medford for?" Harry asked himself. But, of course, being no mind reader, he could only guess.

But it was necessary to keep a sharp eye on the doctor, for there was always the possibility that the buying of the Medford ticket was merely a bluff.

This theory, however, proved false.

Dr. Watson went through to Medford.

Harry, who pretended to be asleep all the way, saw him leave the train, and then followed him.

The place was but a small one.

Dr. Watson, instead of turning toward the hotel, struck off across the track and into a road which led toward the woods.

"Where does that road lead to?" Harry asked the station agent, a young fellow, barely out of his teens.

"Dunno. I'm not acquainted around here," he replied.

"Where are the Barrens?"

"They lie over that way."

"Do you know that man going along the road?"

"No. I never seen 'him before."

Harry trailed after the doctor.

It was rather difficult work.

He did not dare to approach very near the man, for it was a clear, starlight night, and discovery would have been certain.

Thus all he could do was to content himself with watching the movements of the short figure from a distance, keeping himself close in the shadows of the stunted pines.

He passed a few small houses, and then all signs of civilization disappeared.

It was just pine trees, pine trees, pine trees—nothing but pine trees, and sand!

Young King Brady had hit the Barrens, all right.

And for the next five miles he hit nothing else.

At last there loomed up ahead of him a long, low, unpainted building, with sheds and a big barn attached.

At first Harry thought that the place might be inhabited, but no light appeared in any of the windows.

Evidently it was some deserted tavern, a relic of Revolutionary days.

He was right.

It was the once famous Denslow tavern, where, in olden times, the Tom's River stage used to tie up.

For many years it had been deserted, and but for its lonely situation and solid construction it must have long since disappeared.

"Can he be going there?" Harry asked himself.

The question was soon answered.

To the Denslow tavern was just where Dr. Watson was going.

He turned in at the front door and disappeared.

Young King Brady was glad to stop and get his breath, for the little doctor was a brisk walker, and he had covered the five miles in lively style.

Harry watched.

The doctor did not come out again.

He crept forward, keeping in the shadows.

Coming opposite the tavern, he saw that the door had disappeared, and that most of the glass in the window was broken out.

At one end the roof had sagged down and seemed about to tumble in.

The old place was a mere wreck.

What, then, could be Dr. Watson's business at night in such a lonely spot?

For some minutes Young King Brady watched the doorway and, nothing occurring, he ventured around into the rear.

There seemed little danger of losing his man.

To plunge into the Barrens at night would be madness for any one not thoroughly acquainted with them.

Once in the rear, the mystery was increased, rather than lessened.

In the upper window Harry saw a glimmer of light.

He shot across the yard, passing a big, wooden pump, a corner crib and a smoke house.

Gaining the barn, the big door of which hung by one hinge, he slipped inside and looked up at the window.

He could see the doctor standing near a table in the act of pouring something out of a bottle.

"What in thunder is he about?" thought Harry. "Has he come away out here to commit suicide? Is he mixing some infernal decoction up there?"

The doctor finished pouring and was seen to restore the bottle to his grip.

Then Harry suddenly saw the light in the window increase, until it shone out like some great star.

It was a sizeable acetylene reflecting lantern.

Dr. Watson pushed the table close to the window, and the light streamed off over the tops of the pines, like the searchlight of a steamer.

"He is signaling some one," thought Harry. "There can be no doubt about it. He has come here by appointment. Some one is watching for that signal back there in the woods."

The doctor now lighted a cigar and sat down on the table, evidently prepared for a long wait.

And Harry settled down for the same, finding an empty box for a seat.

Nearly an hour passed.

The light died out, and the doctor renewed it.

He had smoked two cigars in close succession, when

at last Harry heard a shrill whistle in the woods behind the barn.

Dr. Watson immediately raised the window, and, leaning out, put his fingers in his mouth and whistled three times.

He then shut down the window and, turning his light the other way, began pacing the floor.

Needless to say, Harry kept a sharp eye out.

In a few minutes he was rewarded by seeing a short, stout, young man, with a face as white as chalk, steering across the yard.

He was very shabbily dressed and walked with a peculiar slouch.

There was something fearfully repulsive about the fellow to Young King Brady.

And yet his features were regular and his face intelligent.

He looked like an educated man.

Crossing the yard, he went in through the back door of the old tavern and disappeared.

In a moment Harry saw him in the room with the doctor.

The stranger extended his hand, but Dr. Watson put his own hands behind him.

Clearly they were not friends.

Then the talk began.

Dr. Watson was very emphatic and made many gestures.

The other appeared to be calmer.

Filled with curiosity to know what it was all about, Young King Brady left the barn and stole around to the front door, where he entered and crept noiselessly up the stairs.

CHAPTER V.

STRANGE DOINGS AT THE CEMETERY.

Old King Brady and Alice had not long to wait before the telephone bell rang again.

The old detective was able to gather enough from the one-sided conversation to show him that Dr. Giverson's request was to be granted.

"But we can't do a thing until midnight," said the doctor, as he hung up the receiver. "The superintendent of the cemetery is away; he is expected to arrive at Philadelphia from Baltimore on a train reaching here at eleven o'clock. If we can meet him at the station and get a written order from him or follow up and get it from the house, his assistant, who lives close to the cemetery, will open the vault and let us see the corpse."

"Do you know the superintendent?" asked Old King Brady.

"Only by sight," was the reply. "But Fleming, the undertaker, will attend to that. He will meet us at the station at quarter to eleven.

"Very satisfactory. I regret, however, to take up your time, doctor."

"I am keen to see this thing through, Mr. Brady. Hough had no family and no friends. Although we never

agreed, he was my classmate, and it is really up to me to take an interest in this matter."

"Where shall we meet?"

"Where are you stopping?"

"At the Bingham House."

"Where I will call at about twenty minutes of eleven."

And, having made this appointment, Old King Brady and Alice left.

"I suppose you don't want me, Mr. Brady?" remarked Alice, when they reached the street.

"It would be best not."

"I could at least stand guard outside the vault."

"Come, if you wish; but it must be in male disguise."

"I should not like to have the doctor recognize me."

"Then, cut it out. Anyhow, it is likely to prove a cold night. You could not help a bit."

Alice saw that she was not wanted, and gave up.

Quarter of eleven found Old King Brady at the Reading Station, being introduced to Mr. Fleming, the undertaker.

Dr. Giverson questioned the man about the red bunch on Dr. Hough's leg.

"Did you call Dr. Watson's attention to it?" he asked.

"I did," replied Mr. Fleming; "he made light of it."

"Now, tell me, Mr. Fleming," said Old King Brady, "did you see anything suspicious in Dr. Watson's manner or actions at the time of your attendance at the house? I tell you frankly that poison is suspected in this case, and we don't know who to put it up to."

"Well, I can't say that I did, outside of one thing," replied the undertaker. "He was very nervous, and, while not in the least affected by liquor, every time I met him the man had been drinking."

"And this one thing?"

"It is almost too trivial to mention."

"Out with it."

"Well, when I came suddenly into the room where the corpse lay on one occasion I caught him burning some horrible smelling stuff in the grate. He opened the windows at once to let out the stench and explained to me that he was burning up some old rags which had been used in the sick room, but there were no rags in the grate. What I saw looked like three round balls of something. He struck them with the poker, knocked them to pieces and put the fire out."

Old King Brady glanced at Dr. Giverson, who merely remarked:

"Probably he rolled the rags up into balls."

But when they stood in the train shed waiting for the Baltimore express, the doctor, drawing Old King Brady to one side, said:

"That bears out your theory, Mr. Brady."

"Voodoo business?"

"Most certainly. After a death brought about by the voodoo priests the spirits who cause the death are supposed sometimes to linger in the room. They burn three balls especially prepared to drive them out."

"What is in the balls?"

"Oh, all kinds of trash. They smell horribly. There is no doubt in my mind about it now."

"Who is this Dr. Watson, and where did he come from?"

"I haven't the least idea. I shall very promptly look him up, however. If he is not a registered physician, he had better beware."

"Don't interfere with him till the case is done, doctor. My partner is now on his trail and may learn something. It may spoil my work if he becomes alarmed."

"Very well. Have it your own way; but here comes the train."

It was so, and Mr. Oakman, the cemetery superintendent, came with it.

Undertaker Fleming promptly tackled him.

Dr. Giverson and Old King Brady were introduced.

Mr. Oakman was not overwilling to grant the request.

"I don't see why this business can't hold over till morning," he said. "Is it essential, doctor, that you should examine that corpse to-night?"

"It is to the highest degree essential that it should be done secretly and promptly," replied Dr. Giverson. "Why can't it be done to-night?"

"Oh, if you insist, I suppose it can."

"I shall be greatly obliged."

Mr. Oakman yielded and they went to the waiting room, where he wrote the order.

Old King Brady had provided a cab and, with Dr. Giverson and the undertaker, he was now driven out to Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Here they halted at the house of the assistant superintendent, who promptly answered the old detective's ring.

"That's all right," he said, glancing at the order.

He led them to a little gate, through which they were admitted to the cemetery.

The walk to the receiving vault was a long one.

It stood on the bank of the Schuylkill River.

As they approached Old King Brady thought he heard the sound of oars on the river, and called the superintendent's attention to it; but none of the others had heard.

The big, iron door was unlocked, and they entered the vault.

The instant the superintendent flashed his lantern inside they saw that something was wrong.

A coffin box lay on the floor, with the lid off.

Inside was an empty casket, the lid of which lay on the floor near the lid of the box.

"What in thunder is all this? Body snatchers' work?" cried the superintendent.

"The enemy is ahead of us, doctor," said Old King Brady, flashing his light upon the silver plate.

It was Dr. Hough's casket, and it was empty!

"Quick!" cried Old King Brady. "Have you a boat here?"

"Yes. There is one at the foot of the hill," replied the superintendent.

"What I said was correct. I did hear the sound of oars. These rascals came and went by water. We must follow them up."

They made for the boathouse.

The winter stars were in their glory.

Although there was no moon, it was very light.

"There they go, up the river!" cried Dr. Giverson.

But Old King Brady had already spied the boat.

"Not an instant is to be lost!" he cried, and not an instant was.

As the boat was not big enough for more than three, Dr. Giverson reluctantly consented to remain behind.

Old King Brady and the superintendent did the rowing, and the boat was put forward at all possible speed.

It soon began to be manifest that they were gaining on the resurrectionists.

There were two men in the boat ahead.

Closing in upon them at last, Old King Brady drew his revolver and fired two shots.

They fell short of the boat, no doubt; but they had their effect, just the same.

The resurrectionists were evidently pretty well frightened.

They turned their boat in on the Fairmount Park side and, jumping ashore, took to their heels.

"Both niggers!" cried the undertaker. "Do we follow?"

"We could never catch 'em," said the superintendent. "See, that long, slim one! He runs like a deer."

"Let them go," replied Old King Brady. "To give chase would be useless, and at least we have got the corpse."

"But this is bold work to attack the cemetery, right here on the park side," said the superintendent. "Upon my word! I wouldn't have believed it. Almost seems to me that those fellows must be park employes."

Old King Brady pulled in silence.

It was no use to talk.

He felt that he had positively demonstrated one thing. His visit to Dr. Watson had started things moving.

That the doctor had fathered this resurrection business he had not the least doubt.

They reached the boat and found in it a bag containing the corpse.

Taking the boat in tow, they returned to the cemetery landing, which happened to be very close to the receiving vault.

"Will one of you gentlemen lend me a hand?" asked the superintendent. "This body must be restored to the vault. I don't understand what's got our watchman on this side. We should have met him when we came in."

Both Old King Brady and the doctor lent a hand, and the bag was carried back to the vault.

And still there was no watchman.

The superintendent was furious.

"I'll have that fellow bounced, first thing!" he cried.

"Wait and see," said Old King Brady. "It may be possible to explain all this. Our first business is with the corpse."

He closed the door of the vault and, aided by the undertaker, who joined them now and had been informed of what had occurred, they removed the bag.

"There he lies, the rival of my youth," said Dr. Giverson, looking down upon the dead face. "He always hated me and I certainly had no love for him, but he was my classmate and I shall investigate this to a finish. Mr. Fleming, help me, please."

Details of what followed are not necessary.

Enough to say that, when Dr. Giverson had completed his operations and the remains of Dr. Hough were re-

stored to the casket and deposited in its niche in the receiving vault, at least two of the party were satisfied that the physician had perished at the hands of a black poisoner.

Old King Brady's suspicions were absolutely justified.

It was the Curry case reproduced.

From the red bunch on the back of the leg the tiny bit of bone was removed.

"Dr. Giverson unhesitatingly pronounced it the leg-bone of a mouse, and Old King Brady could not question it, knowing what he knew.

They said but little, as it was not desirable to take the undertaker and the superintendent into their confidence.

"And now," remarked Old King Brady, when they had finished, "how did those fellows manage to get into the vault? That's the question. There has been no breaking and entering here. The work has been done by the aid of a false key. Let us ascertain."

He flashed his lantern upon the lock and proceeded to examine it by the aid of a powerful lens.

"There is wax here, all right," he presently announced.

"False key, sure," said the undertaker.

Meanwhile the superintendent had been prowling about, flashing his lantern here and there.

Suddenly he caught the glimmer of metal in the dry grass.

He bent down and picked up a key.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Ha!" said Old King Brady. "A key! And may it prove a key to the whole situation."

The key was brand new.

"Made this very night," said the old detective; "but these people surely must have had the impression of the lock before I took hold of the case. This is a great find. May I keep it?"

"Subject to my order," replied the superintendent.

"Let me be responsible for it," said Dr. Giverson. "Everybody in Philadelphia knows where I can be found."

The superintendent made no objection.

They started for the gate.

"There really ought to be a watch set here," remarked the undertaker.

"They will hardly come again to-night," said the superintendent. "What I am wondering is about the watchman. He is a very reliable man, and I can't understand it at all."

He was to learn more before they had gone far, for, as they turned into the main avenue of the cemetery, Old King Brady's sharp ear caught a groan.

"Wait! Something doing!" he breathed.

"A groan, was it not?" demanded the doctor.

"Yes."

"Seemed to come from behind that tomb."

They hurried in the direction indicated.

Here, lying on the grass behind the tomb, they found the watchman.

The man lay on his back, groaning deeply.

His limbs and also his face were greatly swollen.

Upon the face, which had turned quite black, were certain strange looking red spots.

"Good heavens! This man has been poisoned!" cried the undertaker.

"O'Brien! Speak! What ails you, man?" asked the superintendent.

There was no answer save another groan.

"More voodoo business. It is touch and go with this fellow," Dr. Giverson whispered to Old King Brady.

"Here! Stand aside!" he added, aloud. "I understand this case. I have seen just such another in Hayti, when I was a young man. If I can't save this man, then no one in America can; but I am afraid he is too far gone even for my skill."

He knelt beside the patient and, directing Old King Brady how to hold his light, he produced a lancet and opened a vein in the watchman's arm.

The blood which flowed was as black as soot.

Dr. Giverson timed the flow, and at what he considered the correct instant, proceeded to check it, which he accomplished in the most skillful manner.

"Bleeding is out of fashion nowadays, Mr. Brady," he remarked. "No doubt it was overdone in olden times; but the medical profession will one day return to it. Nothing else could possibly have saved the life of this unfortunate man."

"Is he out of danger now?" demanded the superintendent.

"By no means," was the reply. "But there is hope. Wait—watch!"

A change had already come over the sufferer.

The swelling of the limbs was visibly diminished.

In a minute the red spots vanished, and while they continued to watch the blackness disappeared, and the face became deathly white."

"He is dying!" cried the superintendent.

"He is making a desperate effort to live," corrected the doctor. "The blood is again circulating. It had almost stopped. He would have been dead now if we had not come as we did. I must give him something to help the heart in its tremendous struggle."

He produced a medicine case and forced a little of a dark liquid down the sufferer's throat.

This seemed to aid immensely.

The whiteness left the face and the swelling of the limbs almost entirely disappeared.

In a minute O'Brien opened his eyes.

"I—I—know—all—you—have—been—doing!" he uttered, gasping for breath. "I—was—poisoned—by—niggers! You—have—saved—my—life!"

CHAPTER VI.

DETECTIVE WORK AT THE OLD TAVERN.

Young King Brady managed to get upstairs in the old Denslow tavern without making a particle of noise.

At the head of the flight he caught the sound of voices, and knew that he was going to hear something, if he could only get close enough.

But it was pitch dark, and he did not dare to show a light.

Thus all he could do was to grope his way in the direction of the sound:

Turning a corner in the corridor, he caught a glimmer of light coming through a keyhole and under a door.

Here, then, was where Dr. Watson was holding his interview.

Harry slipped into the next room.

Here he found what he wanted.

There was a dividing door between the two rooms, which was closed.

Kneeling down, Young King Brady clapped his ear to the keyhole and listened to the voices, the murmur of which he could distinctly hear.

Dr. Watson was speaking.

"I am disgusted," he was saying. "After all I have done for you, Al Fisher, you now show the white feather and talk of welching. It is a shame."

"Your scheme is not practicable. I could never carry it out."

"Wish I had left you in Moyamensing Prison. Have I got to begin all over again? By heavens! it looks so, you cowardly dog!"

"Don't upbraid me, George. If you had been three years in the pen, your courage would not be up to the mark. I tell you, I am a broken man."

"You didn't talk that way when I saw you in prison."

"You excited my hopes. I didn't realize myself how weak and broken I was until after my escape."

"But you will pull up. If you are not getting enough to eat I must locate you elsewhere, only, for heaven sake, don't go back on me now that everything is arranged."

"But you have scared the life out of me. With the Bradys on the case, what have we to hope for? They always succeed?"

"Leave that to me. I have a scheme to put them out of business."

"Through these nigger friends of yours? Who can trust such cattle?"

"My nigger friends, as you call them, are all right. I didn't live in Hayti ten years for nothing. I know how to handle these people. They will do anything I say."

"But you admit yourself that Old King Brady suspects poison in the Hough case?"

"Yes; the old ass had seen a similar case, it appears. Of course, I had no reason to suspect that. But I'll balk him. I have already taken steps in that line."

"If he unearths the doctor and has an autopsy?"

"He can't. Already the body has been stolen from the receiving vault. When he goes there to-morrow to look he will find the coffin empty."

"From what I know of the old man, he is very apt to go there to-night."

"Don't you fret; that's all provided for. Now, come; let us understand each other. If you refuse to go on with this I'll turn the detectives on you. It's easy done, Al. You can't hope to escape them. You have no money, no decent clothes. What will you do? Stick to me, and inside of a few months you will be on Easy street. Who will ever think of looking for you in my house? Within ten days you can be there. The rest is dead easy. Why, man, if you stick to me, you have absolutely nothing to fear."

"Except the gallows, in case we are caught."

"No gallows for yours, even in that case. You had nothing to do with the death of Dr. Hough."

"George, who would ever have believed that you were such a scoundrel?"

"Ta, ta! Never mind that now. It sounds well for you to talk so to me. Clear case of the pot calling the kettle black. Come, come, Al! You have absolutely nothing to fear. Long before it comes time for you to show yourself I shall have disposed of the Bradys, and if not that, and they down me, what will they know of you? Nothing! You will have plenty of time to escape."

"Well, I suppose that's so."

"You will go ahead then?"

"I suppose it is a case of must. Yes, I'll wait!"

"At last we get down to business. Now don't you raise this question again, Al Fisher. Of course, I know you of old. I know that you have no more pluck than a mouse, but that cuts no ice. You haven't one solitary, blessed thing to do but to follow out my orders. Now, don't let me hear any more nonsense. Are you comfortable in there?"

"Oh, in a way, yes; I suppose I am—pretty slim pickings, though. Those people have scarcely enough for themselves to eat, without dividing with outsiders."

"I must see if I can't manage to send you in a lot of stuff, but it will be risky."

"Don't think of it. Take no chances. I live in constant terror of the detectives."

"If I send it in, boy, it will be in such a way that there is absolutely no risk. Make your mind easy on that score. But, come, now we understand each other and our quarrel is over, let's have a drink. I've brought you a couple of bottles of whisky and a box of cigars, which will help some. Try a little soothing syrup and it will put some courage into you. That's what you need."

Harry heard the drawing of a cork then, and the conversation became less interesting.

Al got to talking about some girl.

It seemed to Young King Brady a good time to make his escape, and he did so, getting back to the barn again.

Should he follow the doctor or Al? now became the question.

The doctor's scheme seemed to him perfectly apparent.

This man Al was to be used to personate Randall Ricketts, and thus enable Dr. Watson to get hold of part of Dr. Hough's estate.

And as Harry stood there, thinking, he remembered his feelings when he first saw this ex-convict.

"That fellow is a snake in the grass, rather than a coward," he said to himself.

The idea grew on him.

He felt that not for a good deal would he stand in Dr. Watson's shoes.

It seemed little use to trail Al into some colored settlement back among the wilds of the pine barrens.

"I'll stick to the doctor," he determined. "Hit or miss, he's my man, and, anyhow, there can be no doubt that he is the arch-conspirator of the bunch."

He had scarcely arrived at this conclusion when a dark shadow suddenly flitted past the barn door.

Harry's heart was in his mouth.

It took him all by surprise.

The man was a gigantic negro, the biggest and the blackest specimen of the colored race Young King Brady had ever seen.

The fellow might easily have seen Harry if his attention had been directed towards the barn, but he did not look that way.

He shot through the yard, crossed the road and, plunging in among the pines on the other side, disappeared. Still the two figures could be seen at the window.

Dr. Watson was sitting carelessly on the table smoking.

Al was pacing up and down the room.

Twenty minutes passed, and then Harry saw them shake hands and Al departed.

Something impelled Harry to leave the barn and shoot across to the old smoke house.

It was well that he did so.

In a moment Al appeared at the door.

He looked around cautiously, and then made a bee-line for the barn, which he entered.

Harry caught his breath.

"Lucky for me that I slid out," he muttered.

He continued to watch both barn and window.

Up in the room Dr. Watson seemed preparing to spend the night.

He was engaged now in blowing up a rubber pillow.

Next Harry saw him take a blanket out of his grip.

Al, from the barn door, was watching him also.

"The snake is getting ready to strike," thought Harry. "I think I prefer not to be Dr. Watson to-night; but I must act. This is my time to get next to the man if I can."

But this was not so easy.

There was no back door to the old smoke house, nor even a window; in fact, there were no windows at all.

To attempt to cross the yard would be to certainly betray himself.

Puzzled and anxious, Young King Brady waited.

Suddenly the light upstairs was extinguished.

One moment later a crow cawed in the old tavern yard.

But was it a crow?

Some might have been deceived, but Young King Brady was not.

He knew that the sound proceeded from the barn.

The snake was getting ready to strike.

There were two snakes, a white one and a black one.

A minute later and the black one came gliding towards the barn.

Al was waiting in the doorway.

"Dat yo', boss?" the negro asked in a low whisper.

"Yes."

"Gwinter do it?"

"Sure; but we'll wait till——"

Harry lost the rest of the sentence.

Anxiously he watched the pair.

Further talk was made, but he could not catch the words.

In a moment the two disappeared inside the barn.

Harry drew his revolver.

It was now or never.

If he could gain the house unobserved, it was his chance to make friends with Dr. Watson if he was not detected in his disguise.

But Young King Brady had no fear of that.

He shot across the yard and entered the tavern by the back door.

Here he halted, waiting breathlessly.

But there was no move in the barn.

"I've won the first throw," thought Young King Brady.

Rapidly he made a change of dress.

It was a little difficult doing it in the dark, but Harry managed it all right.

His work completed, he resembled a tramp closely enough to pass muster, he thought.

He started for the stairs and crept up to the doctor's door.

Here he hesitated for an instant listening, but could hear no sound.

"If I knock he'll light the lamp," he thought. "And if I go in he may shoot me."

It was hard to decide, but in the end he opened the door.

He could just distinguish the outlines of the doctor's form rising quickly on the table.

"That you, Al?" a frightened voice called.

"He's a coward, all right," thought Young King Brady, as he answered.

"Doctor, don't shoot! I am not Al. I am here to save your life!"

CHAPTER VII.

ALICE ON THE JOB.

That Alice did not accompany Old King Brady to the cemetery that night proved fortunate.

Detective cases never run twice alike.

Some dawdle along and hang fire for days, while others develop and grow big with results all in a minute.

When the Bradys struck Philadelphia late that March afternoon they had no anticipation that they would be able to do anything of any consequence before the next day.

Already it has been shown how erroneous this was.

As far as Harry was concerned, he had practically surmounted the situation to his own satisfaction, and as for Old King Brady, his discoveries had been of the highest importance.

Alice alone had not been called into action, but her time was now to come.

Old King Brady had not been gone from the Bingham House more than ten minutes when there came a knock on the door of his room.

Alice passed in from her own room and opened the door, finding a colored bellboy outside.

"Beg pardon, miss," he said, respectfully. "I hope I haven't disturbed yo'. I told de lady dat yo' had pro'bly retired, but she 'sisted upon seeing Mr. Brady."

"What lady? Who is she? Have you her card?" demanded Alice. "Old King Brady is out, but I answer for him. Speak!"

"Bless yer, no, ma'am. She hain't got no card. She am only a colored pusson."

"Oh! What's her name?"

"She doan' gib no name. She done come in by de ladies' entrance, and telled de housekeeper dat she wanted to speak to Old King Brady. De housekeeper she send me up to see. Mebbe it's too late. I done tole her so. 'Tain't mah fault, Miss Montgomery. No, indeed!"

"Send her up," said Alice, and she closed the door.

The Brady are well known at the Bingham House, of which they are pretty constant patrons.

Alice had little idea that the coming of this colored woman had anything to do with the case in hand.

"Somebody has seen our names on the register," she thought. "They want us to take up a case. That's all it is."

But of course she was prepared to have this late visit develop into something else.

In a few moments the expected knock came.

Alice called come in, and a young colored woman, plainly dressed, entered.

"You'se Miss Brady?" she asked, making a rude courtesy.

"Yes. What is it you want?" demanded Alice.

It was nothing uncommon to have people address her by the name of her chief.

"I wanted to talk to Old King Brady," replied the woman, "but, seeing he hain't hyar, mebbe I kin talk to you."

"Well, go on. Be quick. It is getting late."

"I knows hit ar', miss. I realize dat, but what I'm going to say is mighty important. Youse is come to Philadelphia to find out about Sam Johnson, what used to work for Marse Doctah Hough. Hain't dat so?"

"Yes, well?"

"Well, miss, if I kin put yer wise, I kin delibber dat ar' tieving nigger inter yer hands, only I don't see how yo' am gwinter arrest him yer ownself, fo' yo' am only a woman. All de same, he's dead drunk to-night, de beast, and would be easy took."

"What are you to Sam Johnson? Why do you come here to betray him?" demanded Alice.

She liked neither the woman's looks nor her manner. That she was a crook she had not the least doubt.

"Who's me?" cried the woman. "Waal, I wuz his gal till yesterday, but he's done got anoder gal now. I'se bound to git squar'. Twel be a sorry day fo' dat ar' nigger when he trew me down, an' he's ergwine to find it out, too."

"What's your name?"

"Nellie Smiff."

"Do you know that Sam Johnson robbed Dr. Hough?"

"He didn't rob de doctah, miss, coz why, him was dead; but he done break into de doctah's desk an' steal a tousan' dollah. He done show hit to me. He done promise to spend hit on me, den he trew me down an' tak' up wid 'nother gal. I doan' stand fo' dat ar' nohow. No, ma'am, not none."

"And where is the money now?"

"Hid in him room somewheres. Mebbe you kin find hit. I kin tak' yo' dar. Sam's dead drunk lak I said. Twel be easy 'nuff."

"And all you want is your revenge?"

"Dat's all, Miss Brady, 'less you want'er give me a reward. I'se ready to take all I kin git, lak yo'self. Will yer come?"

"Where is the place?"

"Down in Danger street."

"That's a bad name. I never heard of such a street in Philadelphia."

"No, ma'am. Mebbe not. An' to tell de trufe, hit hain't de name. Dat ar' street hain't no street but only an alley. Hit hain't got no name, but we cullud folks we calls hit Danger street. Dat ar's de way hit came to git hits name."

"Will it be safe for me, then? I suppose it got its name because of the fights you people have down there."

"Twel be safe ef you go with me an' a pleeceman, miss. I knows de cop on de beat. I'll 'duce yo' to him. When you' tells him yo' Miss Brady twel be all right, I 'specs."

Alice looked the woman over in surprise.

It was the most apparent trap she had ever come up against.

But in spite of that it seemed to her that it might be made to serve her turn.

"I'll go with you," she said. "You go downstairs and wait at the ladies' entrance till I come. If we get the money, you shall have a hundred dollars—see?"

"Which will be mose satisfackry, miss. Tank yo'. I'se suah you won't regret it."

There was triumph in her eye as she sailed out of the room.

Alice locked the door after her and went right to work. Passing to her own room, she slipped into a male disguise.

Part was her own and part Harry's.

When she finished she looked like a young workingman of the common sort.

Turning out the lights and locking the door, Alice slipped out of the hotel unobserved and took her stand in the alley opposite, where she could watch the ladies' entrance.

The Smith woman was just inside the door talking to a young colored man who was on guard.

Alice waited patiently.

At last she saw the man go upstairs.

"Going to see if I'm ever coming," she chuckled.

Doubtless she was right.

The fellow soon returned.

There was some talk between the pair.

Soon after the Smith woman came out and walked away.

Alice trailed after her, wondering where this midnight adventure was to end.

The woman went down on Chestnut street and walked on until she came to the river.

Turning here, she plunged into the same net of narrow alleys where Harry had shadowed Dr. Watson earlier in the evening.

Alice saw that they had come into a colored neighborhood.

The woman kept on until she came to the very house which Dr. Watson entered, if Alice had only known it.

Here she went inside, and the shadowing seemed to be at an end.

Alice now found herself at a loss what to do.

She went up and down the alley several times, but could come to no conclusion.

It seemed useless to hang around there where she was already attracting more attention than was pleasant.

To enter the house was out of the question.

It was a puzzle all around, and she had just about come to the conclusion that she would have to give it up when the door opened and out came the Smith woman, clumsily disguised as a man.

Alice knew her at a glance.

"A crook, just as I supposed," she thought. "And now what? At least I can continue my shadowing, if anything is going to come out of that."

She had started on a longer chase than she realized, but she stuck to it nobly.

The disguised woman led her away out beyond Laurel Hill Cemetery, walking the entire distance.

Striking into the Manayunk road, she kept on until, after making several turns, she entered a little hut back in the lots where there was quite a grove of trees.

It was now after two o'clock, and Alice found herself terribly fatigued.

But there was detective work still to be done, and she bravely buckled down to it.

The neighborhood was an exceedingly lonely one, and just at this point there was no other house near.

Thus Alice was able to creep up to the hut safe from observation.

The only thing she feared was dogs.

No bark came.

She got in close to the window at the side, and was able to peer into the only room the hut contained on the ground floor.

There was a light inside, and Alice, as she peered in, saw an old colored woman lying upon a mattress in one corner.

The Smith woman stood over her.

A pane of glass was broken in the window, and a bunch of rags had been crowded into it to keep the air out, but not tight enough to prevent Alice from hearing what was being said.

"When do yo' tink he will come?" the disguised woman was asking.

"Dunno," was the reply. "Dey'se orter been hyar long ago. I'se skeart fo' dem, honey, I done is."

"Pshaw, Mother Hipple, Buck knows him bizness. Slick one git around him."

"Dan'gous wuk. Dan'gous wuk, honey, 'cose he know him bizness; but pitcher what goes to de well too offen gits broke at last."

"Never wid Buck."

"Oh, I dunno. I dunno. Won't yo' set down twel dey come? I'se all wore out; I want'er sleep."

"Sleep, then," was the response. "I'll wait up fo' dem."

She sat down on a stool and, leaning her chin on her hands, remained motionless for a long time, gazing at the stove, where a bright fire burned.

Alice watched her for a little while, and then drew

away from the window and took up her stand behind a tree.

Somebody was clearly expected, and she did not want to be seen when that somebody came.

She had not long to wait.

Within a few minutes footsteps were heard approaching.

Alice knew before she saw the newcomer that he was a man, and that he was surely drunk.

In a minute a tall, slim darky, very much under the influence, came staggering towards the hut.

It was the same fellow Harry had seen talking to Dr. Watson, if Alice could only have known.

But he was alone, and the old hag had evidently expected two.

He opened the door and walked in.

Alice got to the window just in time to see the Smith woman slapping the newcomer across the face.

"Dar, yo' brack loafer!" she cried. "So yo's drunk agin! Dat's de way. Why keant yo' keep yo'self 'spectable, say?"

The fellow only laughed.

Drunk in his legs he certainly was, but not in his head nor his speech.

"Dar now, woman! Be good an' doan' mak no fuss," he retorted. "I'se a bit wobbly. Dat's all. What about yo' end of de job? Failed lak mine, I 'specs. Know yo' couldn't a-got Ole King Brady 'cause I seen him somewheres else; but what about de young feller an' de gal?"

"I done t'ought I git de gal, Buck, but she fooled me."

"Den yo' doan' git nuffin? Dat hit?"

"Dat's de size of hit. I done git left."

"Nebber mine. So I'se done git left, honey. Goes dat way sometimes."

"You didn't git de stiff?"

"We'se done git hit, yes, but Ole King Brady he too many fo' us. He done chase us off an' git hit away agin, dat ar's what he did."

"Boy, dat ar' means trouble."

"Wiv de doctah, yes."

"Den Ole King Brady get de stiff?"

"Suah ting. I jest done tole yo' dat. 'Specs you'se been hittin' de booze more dan me."

"You lie! Hain't teched a drop. Didn't hev de price. What'll doctah say now?"

"Dunno; but say, Nell?"

"Well?"

"Ole King Brady his mighty sharp. I hears from a nigger in New York dat he cotched onto Job Curry. He know blame well he wuz hoodooed."

"Dat so?"

"Suah ting. An'——"

"Well, spit it out, Buck."

"I'se gwine down to de Barrens fo' a few days. Sho's I doan', Ole King Brady he ketch me. I'se gwine to de voodoo house to work de charms on him."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CLEW OF THE RATTLESNAKE'S HEAD.

Out at the cemetery, when the watchman revived enough to get his tongue, Old King Brady asked Dr. Giverson if it would be safe to question him.

"I wouldn't make him talk too much," replied the doctor. "He has had the narrowest kind of an escape; but you want to hear what he has to say, and you can't wait till to-morrow for the information, so go for him now."

Old King Brady bent over the sufferer, who appeared very much dazed still.

"Tell me how this happened so that I can square you with these scoundrels," he said. "See, I am a detective. Tell me all about it now."

It took time to get at the story, and it was a rambling one when it came.

It appeared that while going his rounds the watchman was suddenly attacked by two negroes who sprang out from behind a tomb.

They choked him almost into insensibility and, having thrown him down, forced some vile-tasting liquid down his throat, after which he remembered no more until he was aroused by Dr. Giverson.

They carried the unfortunate fellow to the superintendent's house, and then Old King Brady, Dr. Giverson and the undertaker got into their cab and were driven back to Philadelphia.

Reaching the Bingham House, the old detective found a note from Alice, stating that she had gone out on the shadow after a colored woman who had called upon her.

Before Old King Brady had time to get worried about her Alice came in.

Late as it was, she told her story and listened to Old King Brady's.

"We have made wonderful headway for one night," said the old detective, "but we can make no more till morning. Harry is not in yet, but doubtless he will turn up in the morning, and then we can decide what course to take. Your man Buck is beyond all doubt the long, slim darky I saw in the boat. Whether he is Sam Johnson or not remains to be seen; but tell me, Alice, did he say anything more about this proposed trip to the Barrens? There are several ways of getting into that dreary region. How do they propose to go?"

By train to Mount Holly and then to walk. They start the first thing in the morning."

"And then I am to be bewitched by voodoo work. If Harry was only here I should make it a point to be on the first train. Let us see when it leaves Camden."

The time-table was consulted, and it was found that the first train left at seven o'clock.

"They will never get it with the man drunk," declared Old King Brady.

"Why not go out there to-night and arrest him?" Alice suggested.

"No; I want to get at the bottom facts in this business. Lock the man up and you will never get a word out of him. If he is a Haytian, as Dr. Giverson suspects, he would stand for being torn to pieces before he would reveal his voodoo secrets. The only way we can get at the truth is by careful shadowing. I am inclined to think, Alice, that even if Harry don't turn up we better take the matter up and trail him down there to the Barrens. We will be at the station in time for the train."

"Very well. Just as you say."

"Did they catch on to you at any time?"

"No, indeed!"

"Then you better dress like a female servant. Now I'm going to bed and get what little sleep I can. I will call you at five o'clock."

And at five-thirty Old King Brady and Alice were on the move.

Harry had not yet returned.

They went directly to the Camden station and got breakfast there.

Old King Brady was disguised as an old hayseed, and looked the part perfectly.

He and Alice separated as soon as they struck the station, and each watched from a different point.

But the Mt. Holly train pulled out, and the man Buck did not come.

Old King Brady and Alice got together for a minute on the platform after the train pulled out.

"You see," said the old detective. "It is one thing for a drunken man to talk overnight about making an early start and another for him to do it. They will come trailing along by and by. We must wait."

The next train was at nine-thirty, and in time for that the man Buck and the Smith woman appeared at the station.

The man carried a huge pasteboard telescope bag which was stuffed to bursting.

It looked as if they were off for the Barrens prepared for a considerable stay.

Alice pointed them out to Old King Brady by a secret sign.

The old detective at once got busy, and saw that instead of Mt. Holly the negro bought tickets for a station called Winslow.

Old King Brady, who had not yet bought tickets, did the same.

During the long ride neither he nor Alice spoke; they seated themselves, of course, in different parts of the car.

Winslow proved to be just no place at all.

It was located right on the edge of the Barrens, between Lumberton and Medford, the station from which Harry struck into that desolate waste.

The couple started directly away from the station.

Old King Brady and Alice watched, and saw them strike in among the pines to the left of the turnpike, which here followed the railroad.

Knowing that it would be impossible to keep them in sight without being discovered, Old King Brady took his time and made some inquiry of the station agent about the region.

From this man he learned that there was but one settlement of blacks in that part of the Barrens, and this was about six miles in, a well-defined trail leading to it.

There were, however, many isolated cabins scattered all over the region, some occupied by colored people, others by whites quite as degraded as their dusky neighbors.

This accomplished, Old King Brady and Alice started off together, for this mission was too dangerous a one to make it safe for Alice to go alone.

"You want to look out for dogs," cautioned the agent.

"Probably you will have no trouble locating your man. The niggers all know each other in there."

This last was in response to Old King Brady's claim that he was looking for a mythical colored man who had promised to sell him a lot of coonskins.

The station agent was a dull sort of fellow, and seemed to believe the yarn.

It was a beautiful day, and it carried with it the first touch of spring.

The path which the negroes struck in on was easily found, and they followed it along for nearly two miles, taking their time.

Old King Brady had decided to get as near the larger settlement as possible, so they took to the woods twice when they sighted cabins.

But the morning wore away and afternoon came, and still they came to no settlement.

"We have certainly gone further than the agent said," declared Alice.

"I should say we had covered fully eight miles," replied Old King Brady.

"And for the last two hours we have not seen a sign of human habitation. Do you think we can have got off on to some other trail?"

"I'm afraid we have, Alice. I didn't like to say so, but that is my idea. Hungry?"

"Indeed I am."

"We will stop and eat."

"Seems to me it looks as if there was a clearing ahead. Suppose we push on a little further?"

They had brought a small supply of provisions with them, and even Old King Brady himself was beginning to think it was about time to tackle them.

They pushed forward towards the supposed opening and found that it actually was one.

Here for a considerable space the trees had been cleared away, and in the middle was a heap of stones perhaps a hundred feet in circumference and about four feet high.

"What have we here?" demanded Alice.

Old King Brady did not immediately answer, but walked around the stone heap.

"I call your attention to the singular fact that there are no stones to be seen about here outside of this heap," he said.

"I noticed that," replied Alice, "all sand everywhere we have been."

"That's right. These stones have surely been brought from a distance and thrown here."

"Hark! It seems to me I hear footsteps."

"You are right. Let's get back among the trees."

They hurriedly got out of the clearing and, placing themselves in among the pines, waited.

In a moment they heard a snatch of song rendered in a cracked voice.

Then out from among the trees on the other side an old darky appeared carrying a bag on his back.

He appeared to be heading for the outside world, but what he had in the bag the detectives could only guess.

As he entered the clearing he stopped singing and began fumbling in his pocket.

Out came a rabbit's foot.

He stooped and touched it to the stone heap.

Then putting down his bag he opened it, took out a good-sized stone, tossed it on the heap and went his way, following the trail by which Old King Brady and Alice had come.

"There you are," whispered the old detective. "The mystery is explained."

"A voodoo stone pile," said Alice.

"Yes."

"And what does it mean?"

"It means for one thing, that no darky will pass that heap without depositing a stone upon it. Why they do it I'm sure I don't know. Such stone heaps are found all over the world. The custom is a most ancient one, and seems to belong to no particular race."

"Did you see him touch his rabbit's foot to the stones?"

"Certainly. That is his peculiar form of superstition; but don't ask me to explain it. Meanwhile we will eat."

They did their eating in among the trees.

Nobody else passed.

After they were through they started to resume their journey.

Now they discovered that there were three distinct trails leading out of the clearing.

After some thought Old King Brady chose the one by which the old darky had come in, and, after following it for about a mile, they were brought to a halt by hearing dogs barking on their right.

"What a frightful country!" exclaimed Alice. "Do you suppose Harry can ever find us here if things come around so that he has to come and look after us?"

A letter had been left at the Bingham House informing Harry where they had gone.

Little did either guess that he had preceded them to the Pine Barrens.

"Oh, I daresay he will manage; but we are not going to stay here forever," replied the old detective. "Come on. We want to keep clear of the dogs, whatever else we may do."

The trail continued.

As they advanced the pines came in thicker, and were smaller as a consequence.

There were so many little ones that they amounted almost to underbrush.

Suddenly Old King Brady paused beneath one which was considerably taller than the rest.

"Look up there, Alice!" he said, pointing.

There in the crotch of the tree was a huge rattlesnake with its head erect.

Alice gave a scream and pulled back.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid," chuckled Old King Brady. "The creature will never harm us."

"Dead?"

"Alice, if it had been alive it would have rattled before this. Incidentally, rattlesnakes don't climb trees. It is only a stuffed snakeskin, with a very carefully carved wooden head nailed to the tree trunk. Now we have a voodoo clew beyond all doubt."

"And what about the snake? Why is it there up in the tree?"

"You see the head is erect and points northeast. It is a guide post to the initiated. I saw a similar thing

once in the Louisiana swamps. On that occasion I followed up in the direction which the head of the snake pointed; and it brought me out to a voodoo magic house. That's what will happen if we follow up this clew of the rattlesnake's head."

"Well! And if Buck and Mrs. Nellie propose to weave spells for the destruction of the Bradys, don't you think the voodoo magic house will be the place they will head for?"

"I am so sure of it," replied Old King Brady, "that what I propose to do now is to follow the clew of the rattlesnake's head."

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTURED BY A BAD BUNCH.

As Harry spoke in the darkness he heard Dr. Watson give a queer gulp.

"Say, I've got you covered, man!" he exclaimed. "Tell me who you are or I fire."

It was so!

Young King Brady caught the glimmer of a revolver in the starlight.

He put his hands behind him.

"Shoot an unarmed man who came here for no other purpose than your own good!" he exclaimed. "Do it, if that is the sort of coward you are. I don't care whether I live or die."

The doctor put up his revolver, but kept his hand upon it.

"Tell me what you mean?" he demanded. "But first, who are you, and how came you here?"

"My name is Phil Ray. I'm a printer out of a job," he said. "I've been wandering about the country. I was striking for Tom's River, lost my way and put up for the night in the barn. Just now I heard a white man and a nigger plotting against Dr. Watson. They pointed up at this window. I had seen your light, boss. I took it that you were probably Dr. Watson, and so I came here to warn you. That's all."

The doctor gave another gulp.

"A low-sized man with a hang-dog face?" he demanded.

"As near as I could see, yes. But, doctor, they are coming after you. I'll stand up and fight for you, for I don't believe in two against one; but wouldn't it be better to get out while there is time?"

"We will go now," replied the doctor hurriedly. "Stick by me, Ray, and I'll make it worth your while."

He slid off the table, and without even waiting to pack his grip started for the door.

They stole down the stairs and out by the front door.

"Where are they—or rather, where were they when you saw them?" whispered the doctor.

"In the barn," replied Harry.

"I thought you said you were in the barn?"

"So I was, but when I saw the nigger cross the yard I slipped over to the smoke house."

"Hurry! Hurry! Let's get out of this!"

"Which way shall we go?"

"Towards Medford. I want to get the train for Philadelphia. If I can once hit it, I'll make one ungrateful dog sick."

"You know the man, then?"

"Know him? I should say I did!"

A fierce imprecation followed this speech.

Harry kept a still tongue after that, and they hurried on up the road, keeping well in the shadow of the trees.

Again and again Dr. Watson looked back.

At last Harry heard him give a groan.

"They are after us," he said.

"Brace up," replied Harry. "They haven't got you yet, boss, and they won't!"

He looked back and saw two men running.

In the dim light he could just make out the features of the man Fisher.

The face of the other was a blank, and Harry knew that he must be a negro.

As he looked they plunged into the woods on the right and vanished.

"They have gone into the woods," he said.

"Then perhaps they didn't see us, after all."

"I don't catch on to their curves. Is there any reason why they should want to do you up?"

"The white man has a reason, yes. Probably he has promised to pay the nigger."

"Caw! Caw! Caw!"

The sound rang out dismally.

"Run!" cried Harry.

"What's the matter?" demanded the doctor.

"They are signaling."

"What, that call? It was only a crow."

"Crows don't caw at night. They are signaling, surest thing! Run, doctor! Run!"

They ran with all speed.

And then it came to Harry that they better hide somewhere if there were those ahead of them likely to take a hand in their capture.

He told the doctor, who agreed with him.

They slipped in among the trees on the left and halted. Just then the cawing was repeated on ahead of them.

"They are answering!" whispered Harry.

The doctor was trembling all over.

"Ray, don't desert me!" he gasped.

"Haven't the least intention of it," replied Harry.

"Perhaps you don't know this place as I do. These woods are filled with niggers who are half savages, voodoo worshippers. Know what that means?"

"Sure. I once lived down in New Orleans."

"Then you know all about it. These people are the very worst ever. Heavens, I wish I had never come here!"

He did not seem to have the least suspicion of Harry.

Indeed, the man was too badly frightened to think of much of anything but himself.

Presently they heard cautious footsteps in the woods on the other side of the road.

Dr. Watson clutched Harry's arm desperately.

"Great heavens, Ray, I don't know what I ever shall do!" he panted.

"Brace up," said Harry. "It will do no good whatever to get scared."

"Scared, man! I'm a nervous wreck! Oh, why did I ever go in for this? The wretch intends to have the niggers kill me so that he may have all for himself."

This last was said beneath the breath.

But Harry felt that he understood.

He had already made up his mind that the plot was to have the man Fisher personate Dr. Hough's heir, Randall Ricketts.

This had been Young King Brady's belief from the start, and we may as well add right here that the event proved he was right.

The sounds passed.

There was more cawing.

Then suddenly all sound ceased.

They waited for a long time—nearly twenty minutes—and nothing occurred.

Dr. Watson had now quieted down somewhat.

"Do you think they can have gone, Ray?" he asked.

"Don't know what to think," replied Harry. Nor did he. He was puzzled at this silent turn of affairs.

"What ought we to do?" asked the doctor.

"Know what I would do?"

"No; what?"

"Get back to the house. It is the last place they will ever think of looking for us."

At first the doctor violently opposed this.

Then when Harry dropped the subject he came back to it again of his own accord.

"Do you really think that would be a good scheme?" he asked.

"I do. We needn't stop in the room where you were before, you know."

"Well, then, let's try it," said the doctor, "only let's keep in the woods."

"We will advance very cautiously," replied Harry. "I'd say go ahead for Medford only I feel perfectly sure that they are laying for us down the road; but still I may be mistaken. You ought to know best."

"I'm so rattled I can't think."

"Has your white man much influence with these colored people?"

"He is in trouble himself; the detectives are after him, to tell you the truth. He has been hiding in there for the last month."

"In the woods with the niggers, you mean?"

"Yes."

"He ought to be pretty well acquainted by this time, then."

"That's what. The ungrateful wretch! But for me he would be in Moyomensing prison now."

"How about that?"

"Oh, don't ask me any more. I can't explain, and I won't!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't want to butt in on your private business."

"That's all right. Naturally you want to know, but all the same I can't tell. Aren't we most there?"

The doctor was so excited that he kept running into trees.

Harry looked out on the road.

"Right there now," he said. "Come on! We must make a dash across the road."

They did and gained the tavern unseen.

Here they spent the night in one of the downstairs rooms, where they could make a break for the open at the first alarm.

But no alarm came, and the long night ended at last.

By the first break of dawn Dr. Watson insisted upon getting on the move.

Harry raised no objection, for he felt that as soon as it was fairly daylight there was danger of the return of the enemy.

They hurried along the road in the direction of Medford, and had covered about two miles when suddenly the loud barking of dogs was heard ahead of them.

Then all in the same instant two huge mastiffs came out into the road.

Two colored men quickly followed them.

They could hear the shouts of others behind.

Harry whipped out his revolver and fired.

The foremost dog dropped in his tracks.

The doctor was too badly rattled to even draw.

"Call off the dog! Call off the dog! I surrender!" he yelled, throwing up his hands.

Harry fired again and missed.

At the same instant a big stick thrown by one of two men who were closing in behind took him over the back of his head with stunning force.

It did the business for Harry all right, and he fell in his tracks.

He was only stunned, and in a minute consciousness returned.

But the mischief was done.

His hands were bound securely behind his back.

One of the darkies caught him by the arm and lifted him to his feet.

"Now yo' stan' dar, white boy!" he cried. "Be good or I'll shoot yo' head off. I'se got you'm 'volver now."

Dr. Watson was in the same fix.

His watery blue eyes were bulging from their sockets in his terror.

There were four of their captors, all negroes.

One now came up and dealt Harry a wicked blow in the face.

"Take dat ar' fo' killin' mah dawg!" he snarled.

The blow drew blood which Harry was powerless to wipe away.

Some idea of decency seemed to take possession of the doctor now.

"Look here, you," he cried. "This man isn't in it. Al Fisher set you on me. Isn't it so?"

"'Specs yo' know, boss," replied the one who had lifted Harry up.

"Well, then, let me tell you that Fisher doesn't even know this man. No more do I. I simply met him on the road. Let him free."

"Not on yo' life."

"But what is he to you? Of course I know why I am wanted, but there is nothing in keeping him a prisoner."

"Won't do it, boss, an' dat ar's all dere am to it. Won't do it none. Youse shet up yo' head and come along with us—see?"

Two of them got hold of the dead mastiff and carried the carcass in among the trees.

Then the procession started.

Two went ahead, and two followed the prisoners, the dog apparently not minding the death of his companion in the least ran ahead of all.

For a few hundred yards they kept to the woods and then struck in upon a narrow trail.

This was followed through many windings for a long distance, as much as five miles, Harry thought.

Not a word was spoken by their captors, except once or twice to tell the doctor to shut up when he tried to bribe them with promises to let him go.

At last they came to a rude hut which stood in the midst of a little clearing.

A dog rushed out at them, barking furiously, but an old white-haired darky, whose face was one mass of wrinkles, came to the door and called him off.

"Who you uns got dar?" he demanded.

"Boss Fisher's man fo' one, Uncle Mose," was the reply. "De oder am a stranger. 'Specs he'll do fo' to-morrer night."

"Ho!" cried the old man, looking hard at Harry. "Dat's not a bad idee. Mebbe he will."

"Gwinter leab him wid yo', Uncle Mose."

"Well, all right, honey. Better tie him legs, dough."

"Oh, I'll tie him all right, Uncle Mose," was the reply, and the fellow caught hold of Young King Brady and pushed him toward the hut.

CHAPTER X.

THE STARTLING DISCOVERY IN THE VODOO HUT.

The rattlesnake's head pointed directly away from the trail and towards the forest.

Old King Brady got out his compass and ascertained the direction, which was due northeast.

"We can only try this thing out to a finish," he said. "I am curious to see where all this is going to end."

He pushed ahead among the young pines.

At the start there was no sign of a trail, but they soon came into one.

So far the country through which they had been passing was just one dead level, but before they had gone far there came a change.

For here the trail divided.

One arm of it descended into a deep, broad hollow.

At the bottom stood a dozen or more negro huts.

They could see children and dogs playing about, and in front of one of the huts a colored woman was busy at a washtub.

It was a good place to reconnoiter, and Old King Brady, getting out his glass, stood surveying the scene.

Presently a man came out of one of the huts and passed into another.

After a little he came out again, accompanied by another colored man.

"I make that your man Buck, Alice," announced Old King Brady. "Take the glass and see."

Alice did so.

"Yes, he is Buck all right," she said.

"Thought so; but my eyes are getting old."

"Nonsense, Mr. Brady! You have the keenest sight of any man I know."

"Then here is the place they were heading for, and believe me, the voodoo magic house can't be far away."

"Shall we take a look for it now?"

"Yes; the sooner the better. We must begin to think of the night. We have scarcely time to return to the station before dark."

"Don't worry on my account, Mr. Brady. I shan't mind a night in the woods if it is no colder than it is now."

"We may indeed have to come to it, Alice; but let us get ahead and see what fortune has in store for us."

They took to the upper trail which led along the top of the bank marking the edge of the hollow.

Presently they came in sight of a hut, and a halt was made while Old King Brady examined it.

The place appeared to be deserted.

Satisfied that it was so, Old King Brady hurried Alice past it.

Nobody appeared, and in a moment they were among the pines again.

Soon the trail once more divided.

They could see that the left-hand turn led to another hut at some little distance away.

This time they did not stop to investigate, but just pushed on, coming at the end of about half a mile to a rude paling which cut off further advance.

Listening and hearing no sound, they began following the paling around, for it was apparently circular.

But it did not describe a complete circle, as it came to an end at the bank skirting the hollow.

Apparently there was no gate, and within was the thickest growth of trees they had yet seen.

But on their return trip Old King Brady discovered a gate, which he opened, and they passed inside.

They had not gone far in among the trees when they suddenly came upon a round building with a low, thatched roof standing on short posts like a corn crib.

There was a door, but no windows.

One glance was sufficient to enable Old King Brady to determine its true character.

"Here is our voodoo house, Alice," he said.

"It looks it."

"That's what it is. Slow and easy now. If there is anyone inside we shall be pretty apt to know it in a minute or so."

They waited, but there was nothing doing.

Old King Brady ascended the steps and tried the door. It was securely locked.

But the lock was of the simplest construction, and the old detective, with the aid of his skeleton keys, had it open in an instant.

"Coast clear," he said. "Come on, Alice, let us get in our fine work while we can, for in a minute there will be somebody prowling about here like as not."

It was so dark inside that even with the door open it was hard to make out much until their eyes became accustomed to the gloom.

There was little to be seen.

A smooth, circular floor, and a circle of tree trunks which served as pillars to support the roof.

In the middle was a pile of stones, heaped up so as to form a sort of square altar.

The only striking thing was a bunch of human skulls which hung suspended from the rafters directly over this rude altar.

The place had a moldy, damp smell, which seemed to indicate that it was seldom used.

But it was a voodoo house all right, and as such Old King Brady was greatly interested in it.

"I should like much to see one of their meetings here," he remarked.

"I never knew that Northern negroes practiced voodooism," remarked Alice.

"Well, as for that, these people can scarcely be called Northern negroes," was the reply. "New Jersey was a slave State up to the time of the Civil War, although the fact seems to have been pretty thoroughly forgotten by everybody. Almost no slaves were held in the northern part of the State, nor had there been for years, but in South Jersey there were a good many; no doubt, after the war colored people from Maryland and Delaware came up here and settled in these wilds. There is a certain class of them that take to this sort of life, and they are just the kind to drift back into heathen ways. But come, we better get out of this before someone comes."

They left the voodoo house, and Old King Brady locked the door.

"What are we to do now, Mr. Brady?" demanded Alice.

"Let us take a look at those two huts which we passed," was the reply. "If the one we saw by the roadside really is deserted, it may afford us shelter for the night."

They returned there, and Old King Brady ventured in.

The hut was a mere wreck, and there was no furniture inside. Evidently it had been for a long time vacant.

"Alice, I think we will tie up here for the night," said the old detective. "We can do little by daylight, but after dark I shall not be afraid to venture down into that hollow. What do you say?"

Of course Alice assented, for she never opposes her chief.

It was now half-past four, and within an hour darkness would be upon them.

Old King Brady pushed about outside, and in a tumble-down shed found boxes for them to use as seats.

The prospect for a comfortable night was a slim one, for they did not even have a pair of blankets.

Still, both the old detective and Alice are well used to such inconvenience, and they prepared to make the best of it.

One of the first things Old King Brady did was to change back to his usual dress, in which he always feels more at home.

They took their places inside the hut, where they could sit on the boxes and have a view out of the window without being seen by anyone passing along the path.

"Here we will watch till sundown, and then we will eat supper and after that start on the warpath again," said the old detective. "Of course nothing may come of all this, but our body-snatcher is here, and there is always

the chance that we may pick up some information of value."

"If nothing better, you may be able to arrest him and run him back to Philadelphia," replied Alice.

"Yes, and that is what we will do if it comes around so. But now to watch."

Five o'clock came, and then they saw an old white-headed negro with a terribly wrinkled face come trudging along the path.

He carried a big covered basket on his arm and disappeared in the direction of the voodoo house.

Nothing more occurred for another half hour.

It was now twilight, and soon darkness would be upon them.

Old King Brady was beginning to think of dividing their small stock of provisions and making a supper out of half when another person hove in sight, apparently heading for the voodoo house.

This was a tall, slender black woman with very marked features.

She wore a dress of some dark, heavy woollen stuff which was embroidered all over with red and yellow stars.

She bore little resemblance to the ordinary American negro, nor was she very black.

There was something decidedly French about her features. She was bareheaded, and her hair, which was long, jet black and perfectly straight, hung down in a great mass far below her waist.

She walked as erect as a drum-major, and with an exceedingly proud air.

Both detectives watched her with keen interest, and saw her disappear along the path leading to the voodoo house.

"My!" exclaimed Alice. "That woman has all the airs of a tragedy queen."

"Beyond all doubt a voodoo priestess," replied Old King Brady, emphatically.

"Looks like a foreigner, too. Not a bit like an ordinary colored woman."

"Exactly; and if you want my opinion, she is from Hayti, San Domingo, or somewhere down that way; but let us make the best supper we can, Alice. We may find plenty to do before the night is over, and we want to be ready."

They ate where they could still watch out the window, but it was after six o'clock before there was anything doing.

Then there came along the trail the one person uppermost in their thoughts.

He was the negro Buck, and he was alone.

He sang a snatch of wild song as he walked.

It was in French, and Alice caught the words.

Instead of taking the trail to the voodoo magic house, he turned abruptly to the left into the path which led to the other hut which Old King Brady and Alice had seen half-hidden among the pines.

"There goes our man," said Old King Brady. "Apparently he is steering for that other hut."

"He was singing in French, Mr. Brady."

"Was he? I didn't know. I couldn't make out the words. Could you?"

"Yes, in part. It appeared to be a sort of invocation to the spirits to help him."

"So? More voodoo business. I have no doubt they are going to have a meeting in the magic house to-night, and if so, we must take it in from the outside, at least."

"But as there is no window, I fail to see how we are going to manage it."

"Oh, we shall find a way. Meanwhile, since it is now dark, we may as well follow that man. It is time we were busy. I call your attention, Alice, to the fact that the fellow was singing in French. Looks as if he might be a Haytian, too."

"Very likely. I remember seeing in the papers that there was quite an immigration of colored people from Hayti and San Domingo a few years ago, following one of their revolutions."

Old King Brady opened the door and peered out.

"I see no one," he said. "Now is our time, Alice. Come on."

They closed the door and hurried on to the trail leading to the hut in the woods.

Looking ahead, they could see a light shining dimly in the window.

"We want to find out what he is doing in there," said the old detective. "If there is only no dog around."

They advanced to the hut.

It was but one story high, and a little better built than the one they had left.

Old King Brady called Alice's attention to the size, and remarked that there might easily be three rooms inside.

There were no outbuildings of any sort.

This confirmed Old King Brady's idea that the hut was not intended for residence, but for some purpose connected with the voodoo ceremonies. The old detective crept up to the window, which was shielded by a black curtain.

It was hard to get a view of the interior for that reason.

Old King Brady was twisting his head trying to peer around it, when he suddenly pulled away, and in a frightened way whispered:

"Great heavens, Alice, Harry is in there! That black fiend seems to be trying to poison him! Come! Not an instant is to be lost!"

"Harry!" gasped Alice. "Oh, Mr. Brady!"

No wonder the poor girl was excited.

For although there is no engagement between them, Young King Brady has been Alice's most devoted lover now for some years!

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE "POISON HOUSE."

Harry had placed himself in a worse position than he imagined.

As was afterwards learned, the bunch of negroes among which he had been taken were of the most ignorant class.

For several years they had held themselves apart from the other blacks residing on the Barrens, and had been

ruled by a Haytian woman who assumed all the authority of a queen.

This was the woman Old King Brady and Alice had seen going toward the voodoo magic house, and of whom we shall have more to say later.

Of course Harry knew nothing of her, nor did any opportunity come his way to gain information about his captors.

He was taken into a back room in Uncle Mose's cabin, and here, his legs being tied, he was tumbled over on the floor and left to himself.

The situation was most despairing.

At the time of his capture Harry had been searched and his revolver and everything of value taken from him.

The blow on his head had been a severe one.

Ever since his head had ached fearfully, and he felt flighty now.

As he lay there he felt that he was losing his wits altogether.

He had an insane desire to burst out laughing, to sing and dance.

It was all he could do to keep these feelings down.

As he lay thinking about it the idea came to him that he might have been dosed with some decoction while he was unconscious.

And perhaps this was so. Young King Brady never knew.

While he was struggling with his singular feelings he fell asleep.

How long he slept Harry could only guess, but when at last he awakened he found that he was no longer alone in his misery.

Dr. Watson lay beside him on the straw looking the picture of woe.

But Harry felt better now, and his head was comparatively clear.

He rolled over and faced the doctor.

"Well, here we are, it seems," he said. "How do you feel?"

"Rocky," replied the doctor. "Decidedly rocky. They made me drink some infernal voodoo mixture or another which has taken all the strength out of me. You got your dose, too, but perhaps you didn't know it, for you were unconscious at the time."

"I suspected as much. I felt bad enough awhile ago, but I went to sleep and now I feel better. Doctor, this is a bad job."

"The worst. Worse even than you can imagine. Ray, I feel terribly to think that I have brought you to this when you tried to help me."

"Don't worry your head about that. Tell me all about it, though. I don't understand what it all means."

"Can't tell you all, for there is a possibility that I may escape, in which case I may be sorry that I didn't keep my affairs to myself."

"I would never give you away. We are both in the same boat."

"That's so, all right, but I can't talk about my own affairs."

"I am not pressing you about your private business, but

I think I have a right to know where we are, why we are here, and what is likely to happen to us."

"Well, you certainly have. There is no question about that, so if you want to know the worst I will tell you."

"I certainly do. I am no child, that things are to be kept back from me."

"No; well, listen. This hut stands at the edge of a settlement of the worst bunch of niggers on the Pine Barrens. A lot of them are Haytians, and they are all an ignorant, superstitious, degraded lot. They are ruled by a woman known as Sylvia, the Voodoo Queen. Mebbe you don't believe in nigger voodooism, but I happen to have lived in Hayti and to know that there is a whole lot in it."

"I don't know anything about it," replied Harry.

"Then it is to be hoped that you won't find out, though I am very much afraid that we are both doomed to do that. But to go on with my story. That white fellow you saw is an escaped convict. For reasons of my own I brought him in here and arranged with these people to hide him from the detectives. Now he gets the idea that there will be more money in having me done up by them than in carrying out our original plan. I don't know how he came to win them over, but I suppose he has managed to get next to Sylvia in some way, and the rest would be easy. I did all I could for you, Ray. I told them that you had nothing whatever to do with the business, and begged them to let you go, but they would not listen. To-night there is going to be some sort of voodoo shindig in the magic house, as they call a place which they keep especially for their ceremonies. And now for the worst of it. They usually select some victim, whom they dose and so throw into a trance for reasons, which I don't pretend to understand. Sometimes the victim survives the experience, but oftener he dies. One of us has to walk that plank to-night, but whether it is to be you or me I'm blest if I know. There, now, Ray, I have told you all I can. Bad enough, isn't it? For your comfort I'll tell you that I have no doubt that I shall be the goat. Probably I shall die under the dose. Afterwards they may let you go. I am sure I hope they will."

There was further talk, but what Harry learned amounted to nothing.

Two hours passed and no one came near them, until at last someone was heard tumbling about in the outer room.

"Drunk!" breathed Young King Brady. "Can it be Uncle Mose?"

"No," whispered the doctor. "Uncle Mose has gone away, as I happen to know. I'm afraid it is my convict. He was drunk when I saw him last. It looks as if he was worse now."

Just then the door was rudely jerked open, and the man Fisher came stumbling in.

He was indeed very drunk. In fact, it was all he could do to hold himself up.

"Shay, Doc, how you vas?" he muttered, steadying himself against the doorjamb. "Never besser in your life—hey?"

Dr. Watson certainly took the best way possible under the circumstances.

"Come, come, Al, brace up," he said. "You certainly have got a beautiful bun on. Going to keep it all to yourself? I'll bet a dollar you have got a bottle in your pocket. Have mercy on two suffering men and give us a drink."

"Won't do it. S'pose you expect me to set you free while you drink."

"Just the arms. We couldn't hold the bottle without. But what can we do with our legs tied?"

"Won't do it. Shay, Doc?"

"Well, old man?"

"Yer a bird."

"A caged bird just now."

"Ha! Ha! Yes. Shay, Doc, you're a deep one, but you are dealing with a deeper—thash me."

"Oh, you're drunk, Al. Come, lie down here and have a snooze. Do you good, old man."

"Won't do it. You've got something up your sleeves, you or t'other one. Shay, young feller, whash yer name?"

"My name is Phil Ray," replied Harry. "I don't know what you have got against me."

"Hain't got nothin' against yer. It's against that blame fool I am. Know what he's done?"

"Shut up, Al Fisher!" cried Dr. Watson, angrily, and there he made his mistake.

"Won't do it," retorted the drunkard. "I'm going ter tell him what you are. Shay, he hired nigger poisoner, poison his best friend, Doc Hough! Wantsh me to per-shonate dead man's nephew, Randall—hic—Randall Rickett, who's dead thesh five years, and so get the prop'ty. An' shay, I'm going ter do it, but I'm going ter do it all by my lonies, and instead of giving up half to Doc, I get it all—shee?"

Watson groaned.

"You miserable, drunken owl!" he cried. "You can tell more lies in a minute than I could think up in a year. Don't believe a word he says, Ray."

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Shash the way! Liar yourself!" cried Fisher. "Never mind, Doc! You get the voodoo dose to-night. You know what that means. Bye, bye, baby! You think I'm fool 'nuff to give you half my dear uncle's mun! Oh, no! Not on your life. Wait and shee."

He turned and bumped heavily against the door.

Staggering back, he rubbed his head and made another try.

This time he got through, but in the other room he must have lost his legs, for they heard him fall.

Dr. Watson called to him, but he did not answer, nor did they hear him move again.

"He's off," remarked Harry.

"Ray," said the doctor, controlling his voice as well as he could, although it was apparent that he was laboring under great excitement, "I want you to understand that you can't believe a word that fellow says. He is not only an ungrateful dog who has turned on his best friend, and that's me, but is also the biggest liar in creation."

And Dr. Watson put out more of this sort of talk.

Another hour passed, during which there was no movement heard in the next room.

Then somebody entered the hut and came through into the back room in which the prisoners lay.

The new arrival was a tall, slim, foreign-looking negro. Alice and Old King Brady would instantly have recognized their man Buck, but the doctor called him "Sam."

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come!" he exclaimed. "Sam, you see the trouble I am in. Set me free!"

But Buck looked down at him with a sarcastic grin.

"Dunno 'bout dat, boss," he said. "I'se been tole 'bout dis yere quarrel between you an' dat ar' Fisher. 'Specs I kean't take sides one way or nuther till after we uns hold a meetin' to-night. Den we will see what's to be did."

An extended argument followed.

Dr. Watson pleaded, threatened, made big promises of money, but it was all no use.

At last the fellow suddenly brought the conversation to an end by saying:

"Kean't talk no mo' now, Doc. I'se gotter git ready fo' to-night."

He drew a curiously-shaped flask of black glass from his pocket and, kneeling down beside Harry, caught him by the throat and pressed the mouth of the flask to his lips.

And Harry found himself powerless to avoid the dose. Swallow the foul-tasting decoction which the bottle contained he had to.

He immediately lapsed into unconsciousness.

Hours passed before he knew anything again.

And now the scene had changed.

Harry found himself lying upon a cotbed in a small room.

It was lighted by a peculiar little round lamp attached to an old gas fixture over the bed.

Upon a shelf above the foot of the bed were various bottles.

Nearby was an old chiffonier, upon which stood a big bowl filled with some steaming liquid which filled the whole room with a horrible stench.

A door with a portierre of black cloth cut off the room beyond, and above it was a human skull, upon which rested an old slouch hat.

Harry awoke in horrible distress.

His head ached to bursting, his stomach seemed on fire, and there were pains all over him.

He could scarcely think, but it came to him that he had been poisoned and that his case was hopeless.

In the next room he could hear someone moving about, and in a moment the curtain was thrust aside, and the black poisoner, in his shirt sleeves, came into the room.

"Ha! You'se awake!" he cried. "Good 'nuff. Now's de time I gib you a second dose."

He bent over Harry, who felt himself helpless in his hands, and, rudely pulling his mouth open, looked at his tongue.

"You'se comin' along all right," he chuckled. "Doan' feel much like talkin', does yer? Kean't speak ef yer try. Nebber will, again, more likely, but yer can heah. Listen! I knows yer now. You'se Young King Brady, de 'tective. Say, I done come hyar to work voodoo spells on de old man. Nebber guessed de snake god, him d'liber de young one into mah hands! He! He! Now I'se gwineter git a move on an' gib yo' de second dose." He produced the same black flask and proceeded to

ladle it full of the steaming contents of the bowl, then kneeling on a little stool by the bed.

And just at this minute there came to Harry a ray of hope.

He could hear someone stealthily enter the room outside.

And he knew the step!

It was his great chief; but it looked like a case of being too late, for Harry lay writhing on the couch.

Old King Brady caught the black from behind and pulled him off the stool.

"Harry!" screamed Alice.

Old King Brady is a man of powerful strength, and he quickly overcame the black poisoner and flung him to the floor.

Bending down, he snapped handcuffs upon his wrists, the fellow whining like a whipped cur.

Meantime Alice was bending over Harry.

"Oh, speak! Speak!" she cried. "Harry! Tell me you are not dying! Live for my sake, and I will consent to be your wife."

Harry heard, but he could not answer.

At this instant a loud noise and the rush of several people was heard in the room outside.

Buck yelled something in French.

A dozen darkies came crowding into the room.

And thus were the tables turned.

To stand out against this mob was impossible.

It ended in Old King Brady and Alice both being made prisoners.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

It was with the deepest chagrin that Old King Brady found himself thus defeated.

Harry had lapsed into unconsciousness.

Several of the blacks had revolvers, and they held Old King Brady covered while he and Alice were searched.

Among other things taken was the key to the handcuffs, and the black prisoner was promptly set free.

The talk which followed was all in French, but it was a barbarous dialect which even Alice could not understand.

It did not last long.

Buck soon switched off and informed the old detective that he and Alice must prepare to follow him.

They were neither of them tied up, but escape was impossible.

As they walked to the magic house they were surrounded by the blacks.

Buck led the way, and as they advanced through the pines he began singing in French.

The others joined in a wild chorus.

This was kept up till they reached the magic house.

Here Buck ran ahead and passed in.

There was a long wait.

At last the door of the magic house opened, and there stood the woman with the star embroidered dress.

"Bring in the sacrifice!" she called out in French which Alice could understand.

They were conducted into the big enclosure.

It was lighted by a solitary lamp, and nothing had changed.

The prisoners were led across the floor, and, a trap-door being raised, they were forced to descend a ladder into a narrow vault.

The trap was closed above them, and Old King Brady and Alice found themselves in utter darkness.

"Well, this is a poor ending for our work," sighed the old detective. "Whatever could have thrown Harry into the hands of this bunch?"

"Oh, Mr. Brady, do you think he will die?" gasped Alice.

"My dear," replied the old detective, gravely, "it is certainly necessary that you should prepare yourself for the worst. The poisons employed by these people are most powerful. Still, I prevented Harry from getting that second dose at the time. It is hard to say."

"And for us there is no hope?"

"I always hope," replied Old King Brady.

But he did not tell Alice what he was thinking about, and that was the stone talisman given him by Job Curry.

"If ever you find yourself in trouble with niggers this may save you," the dead Secret Service man had said.

And fortunately Old King Brady had this strange legacy with him now.

Hours passed.

It was not until midnight that the prisoners were released.

Meanwhile they could hear the voodoo worshipers assembling in the magic house.

The floor creaked and trembled under the pressure of many feet.

At last they were summoned through the open trap-door, and Buck was the man who did it.

Old King Brady went up first.

Things had changed in the magic house now.

Fully fifty blacks, men and women, were assembled.

Dozens of lanterns hung to the posts, and the room was very light.

The worshipers stood around in a circle, in the midst of which were Buck, Alice and Old King Brady.

In the center of this circle, resting on the rude altar already described, was a hideous little stone idol, representing the crude figure of a man.

And now suddenly a trap-door flew up behind the idol, and through it came the Queen of the Voodoos, the tall black woman.

She wore her star-embroidered dress, and her hair had been done up like a huge crown.

It was to all appearance full of snakes!

In her hand the Voodoo Queen carried a wand, or straight stick, around which two snakes were twined.

Old King Brady saw that each was a fer-de-lance, the most deadly snake known and peculiar to the West Indies.

This the woman held far from her, and when the worshipers saw it all fell on their faces and began a strange, weird chant.

This ended, they sprang to their feet, and a dance, wild beyond description, began.

But Old King Brady paid little attention to it. He had made a discovery.

The left ear of the idol was missing.

The right ear exactly resembled the stone which he carried now in his pocket where he could lay his hand on it!

If anything could save them it would be Job Curry's legacy, and Old King Brady watched his chance.

The Queen now began a sort of incantation.

Before it had proceeded far Old King Brady suddenly produced the stone.

"See!" he cried, holding it up. "I have brought you this. As a reward I demand that we be set free!"

The Queen stopped short.

Buck made a rush and would have seized the stone, but Old King Brady waved him away and, springing to the idol, clapped the stone against the head at the place where the ear was missing.

It exactly fitted!

A tremendous shout went up as Old King Brady extended the stone to the Voodoo Queen with a low bow.

Buck jumped in and again tried to snatch it away.

As he did so his head struck the snake wand.

Old King Brady and Alice both saw one of the fer-de-lance strike him on the forehead.

With a yell of horror the black poisoner sprang away and fell writhing to the floor.

Horrible confusion followed.

The Queen caught at the stone ear and shouted something in French.

Immediately several men crowded about Old King Brady and Alice, and they were hurried outside of the magic house.

Here they waited for fifteen or twenty minutes listening to the din within the house.

Then the Queen came to them with her hair hanging down and the snakes gone.

The Queen began to talk French, and Alice answered.

It was "Where did you get that stone?" and Alice claimed that Old King Brady had received it from a spirit, who informed him that it would one day save his life.

The Queen never asked another question.

"Your lives will be spared," she said. "The snake god has chosen to kill the man who stole his ear, as he has just confessed. He is dead, but you shall live. Come with me and I will save your friend."

They were escorted to the "poison house," as Old King Brady subsequently learned the hut was called.

Here Harry still lay unconscious, but the Voodoo Queen mixed a dose and administered it which within half an hour restored him to himself with complete use of his limbs and his tongue.

When Harry was able to walk the detectives were escorted through the woods to the Toms River turnpike, where the negroes abruptly left them.

As they made their way to Medford Harry, who declared that he felt almost no ill-effects from his strange experience, related all that had occurred to him since they parted.

"It is plain enough," said Old King Brady. "Buck is Sam Johnson, and Dr. Watson hired him to murder Dr. Hough; his man Fisher was to personate the dead nephew, Randall Ricketts, and they were to divide the estate."

"Pity we have to go away without that interesting pair," sighed Harry.

"Yes; but it can't be helped," replied the old detective. "I am by no means done with this case," he added. "It is back to Philadelphia now, but to-morrow we return here with a bunch large enough to accomplish something."

And this was what Old King Brady did.

That time Alice was left behind, while he and Harry headed a force of twenty armed Secret Service men and detectives.

They penetrated to the voodoo settlement to be treated to a surprise.

The huts in the hollow had been stripped of their belongings and were deserted.

The magic house and the poison house were in ashes.

But in Uncle Mose's house both Dr. Watson and Al Fisher were found dead, stabbed in many places, with the door locked on the outside.

It looked as if the doctor had been set free by the blacks, and he and Fisher locked in the room together and given knives with which to fight it out.

The Bradys learned that Fisher had been a life prisoner at Moyamensing, sentenced for the murder of a friend.

Weeks before he had mysteriously escaped.

As for the voodoo worshipers, they probably felt that trouble was sure to come to them, so they burned their temple and plunged more deeply into the Barrens.

Among Dr. Watson's papers were found letters which absolutely proved his guilt.

It was learned that the man Ricketts had died years before.

Ultimately Dr. Hough's estate went to remote heirs who turned up.

The detectives remained several days around Philadelphia before they got matters straightened up.

They then returned to New York well satisfied with their work, although for it they only received the usual Secret Service fees.

But it was a matter worthy of a greater reward, this case of "The Bradys and the Black Poisoner."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS IN LONDON; or, SOLVING THE WHITECHAPEL MYSTERY," which will be the next number (477) of "SECRET SERVICE."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

One of the largest blasts ever fired in France was discharged recently at the quartzite quarries at Cherbourg, and is said to have displaced 120,000 tons of stone. A tunnel measuring 6 feet wide and 6 feet high was driven into the face of the cliff for a distance of 70 feet, and at its end two branch tunnels, each 20 feet long, were driven to the right and left, respectively. There branches ended in chambers 40 feet apart and 70 feet from the face of the cliff, and measuring each 10 feet by 6 feet. The chambers were charged with eight and one-half tons of blasting powder and 280 pounds of dynamite and the blast was fired electrically. The quartzite obtained from this quarry finds much favor in England as a road material.

Native Chinese journals record the death of a district magistrate by his own hand under circumstances sadly suggestive and fraught with instruction to those who would inquire into the condition of the minor officials in the various provinces, says the China Mail. Disbanded soldiery, thrown upon their own resources, with no means of obtaining a livelihood, hold in terror many a countryside. They rob and spoil the villages and hamlets, and occasionally, uniting in larger bands, make incursions into the town and cities. On a recent occasion the distant city of Wing Shan was visited by a horde of ruffians, chiefly soldiery, for whom the government had no further use, and who were accordingly discharged in the heart of Kwonsi, to become the scourge of the law-abiding and peaceful. No sooner were they within the city than the place became a pandemonium, and the magistrate, helpless in the presence of foes so numerous and dangerous, committed suicide. He will probably obtain some recognition as a patriot, whereas an unsuccessful attempt to rid the city of its foes would have meant disgrace, almost certain banishment, possibly even the death of a traitor. In very truth officials in China, especially those in touch with the people, have to steer between the Scylla of imperial displeasure and its manifold consequences on the one side, and the Charybdis of terrible dangers arising from revolutionist tactics on the other, while they govern a country seething with discontent and ill will.

An energetic young woman visitor to City Hall, Philadelphia, Pa., the other day, nearly created a small panic among the force of guides, whose duty it is to pilot sightseers over the big building, by insisting that she wanted to obtain a view of the city from the top of the central tower. For several days past the elevator to this vantage point has been shut down for repairs, and no visitors have been shown beyond the seventh floor. Such a small thing as a breakdown in the elevator did not, however, deter the athletic female from obtaining the coveted view, and when she learned that

by climbing flights of stairs containing over 500 steps she could reach the top she decided at once to make the trip. Most of the guides in City Hall are either very portly or are advanced in years, and for these reasons none was anxious to accompany the visitor. It is a rule, however, that sightseers must be accompanied by guides, so the men got together and decided to do the job by a relay system. One of the older guides showed the girl through the rooms on the different floors. When they reached the entrance to the tower he was relieved by a younger guide, who escorted the visitor up the first 150 steps. At this point he in turn was relieved by one of the men employed on the elevator work, who accompanied her to the top near Billy Penn and explained as best he could the different points of interest in the city to be seen from the great height.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS.

"In what condition was the patriarch Job at the end of his life?" asked a Sunday-school teacher of a quiet boy. "Dead!" calmly replied the youth.

Fuzz—Don't have anything to do with Fleeceem. He's a bad egg. Fizz—Gracious! I just met him, and he told me he was broke.

"I don't like that there Mrs. Swellman at all," said Mrs. Nuritch. "Well, you ain't got to take no notice of her," replied Mr. Nuritch. "But the trouble is she don't take no notice o' me."

Jack—Give me a kiss. Eva—And what reason have you for wishing to kiss me? Jack (embarrassed)—I had a reason, but I—er—have lost it. Eva—Then you'd better go. I couldn't think of kissing a man who had lost his reason.

She had been to her first party and had indulged not wisely but too well in delicacies that cause internal woe when partaken of to excess. "Why, Geraldine," exclaimed the anxious mother as she welcomed the return of her offspring, "how white you are looking; do you feel sick?" "Oh, no," was the equable reply, "I did feel sick after the ice cream, but I unswallowed myself and I feel all right now."

A Frenchman in conversation with a friend said: "I am going to leave my hotel. I paid my bill yesterday and asked the landlord: 'Do I owe you anything?' He said: 'You are square.' 'That's strange,' said I, 'I have lived long and never knew I was square before.' Then, as I was going away, he shook my hand, saying: 'I hope you'll be round again soon.' I said: 'I thought you said I was square.' He laughed and replied: 'When I said I hoped you'd be round again soon I meant I hoped you wouldn't be long.' English is a difficult language."

Nurses in training have many hardships to bear, but perhaps none is worse than having to appear cheerful under all conditions. A sense of humor is perhaps as great an asset as a nurse can have, for it will help her over many a difficulty. The daughter of a wealthy man up State became imbued with the desire to know how to earn her own living, and to that end she entered one of the large New York hospitals as a nurse. The work was to her liking, and, as she looked on the bright side of everything, she was generally in a happy frame of mind. Her particular "pet" was an old and illiterate sea captain, who was in the surgical ward with a broken arm which would not knit. He was a cheerful old fellow, and his droll remarks gained for him the goodwill of everybody. One day when the nurse had paid him some little attention, he said with an appreciative smile: "Miss L. is the best waitress I ever had!"

SAVED FROM THE BREAKERS.

By COL. RALPH FENTON.

The ice was heavy on the Baltic that season—it was the latter part of 1876—and we expected to be in England by Christmas; but the weather was clear and fine, and the old boatswain found time that Sunday morning to drop his whistle to the end of his lanyard and step into the galley to warm his hands for a few minutes. He lit his pipe with a red coal, and turning to the ship's only passenger, said:

You was sayin' last night, sir, that you hadn't got no faith in stowaways. Well, no more have I, generally speakin'; but I once ran foul of one that wasn't so bad as the rest. It's nigh on to six years ago, when I was quartermaster in a steamer called the Zebra, lyin' at her wharf in Calcutta, and loadin' up for Glasgow. The Hooghly was crowded with sailing vessels that couldn't get no crews, and most of their men had deserted and shipped in steamers that was goin' through the Suez Canal, that had just been opened. They all wanted to go home quick, you see, and to go by the new-fangled route to save making a four month's run round the Cape.

The steamers had all the men they wanted, and more offers from good, able-bodied seamen than they could take. The Zebra was to touch at Londonderry on her way home, and the night that we cast loose at Calcutta with the pilot on board, and dropped down the river with the tide, the skipper was grumblin' like a bear, because, somehow or other, he had shipped five more men than he wanted. Three of them were Irishmen, and like the rest of the crew, they had got advance notes for a month's pay, and cashed them—so, to say the truth, he was afraid they'd take French leave at Londonderry.

The pilot had gone over the side, the watch had been set, and the steamer was driven down the Bay of Bengal, and getting well out toward the Indian Ocean, when there was a row for'ard, and the bo'sun came aft to where the skipper was standing on the poop. He was draggin' a youngster about fifteen years old by the collar of the jacket along with him.

"I hooked him out of the fore hatch, your honor," he says. "I heard him scratchin' around, and I raised the hatchway, and there he lay."

"I was tryin' to get out, sir," said the lad, very bold and polite. "I suppose I'm a stowaway, but I'm a sailor, and willing to work. I asked for a berth aboard the Zebra and couldn't get it; so when they thought I was goin' ashore in the dingey, I slipped into the forehold. I'm bound for Magherafelt, in Londonderry, where my mother lives. I don't want any pay, but if you'll let me work my passage you won't be sorry for it."

Our skipper was a terribly rough man. Turning to me, he said:

"Quartermaster, put that young imp in irons for to-night. I'll see what it's best to do with him in the mornin'. If he doesn't go overboard it's Glasgow he'll land at, and not Londonderry."

I was sorry for the poor lad, but I had to obey orders, and the irons were soon on his wrists and ankles in the fo'c'stle. He was terribly upset, and when I was on watch that night I went to him and tried to cheer him up. It was getting on to four bells when the mate said he'd like to see the boy, and he went into the fo'c'stle.

"Now, my lad," he says, stooping over him with a lantern, "tell us all about it. What did you stow away for? Why didn't you ship in a sailing vessel if you wanted to go home to see your mother?"

"Oh, sir," says the youngster, with tears in his eyes, as he sat up alongside of the post that he was tied to, "I should have been too late, and she'd have been in the poorhouse. You see, I ran away from home two years ago and went to sea, because I was the oldest of the three, and she wasn't able to feed us all. I've sent her a little money since then, and I've had letters from her, but I've never seen her. The day before yesterday I got a letter saying that poor Sallie—my little sister, sir—was dead. It had taken all her money to

bury her, and the quarter's rent will be due in a month. If it is not paid she will be put out. I have saved \$75, and I wanted to give it to her with my own hands. I wish now I had sent it to her; but maybe I can post it to her at Londonderry, if he takes me on to Glasgow."

Dashed if the mate's eyes weren't dim, and I couldn't see very clearly myself when the youngster stopped talking.

"Hold up your head, my lad," said the mate, "and I'll speak a word or two to the skipper."

We went out of the fo'c'stle, and I followed him close enough to hear the boy's story told again.

The skipper thought about it for a few seconds. Then he spoke, and we both knew by the tones of his voice that one of his hardest fits was on him.

"I don't see," he said, "what I have to do with all this. I don't want any more hands, and I won't have any more. But we can stand another passenger. You say the youngster has \$75. Well, he can pay part of his fare at least, and I will give him a cabin berth and set him ashore at Londonderry. Go and get the money from him."

But the mate's face showed plain enough that the irons should go on him first. The skipper saw it, and called to me to uniron the lad and bring him out of the fo'c'stle.

When he was on the main deck the skipper says to him:

"Youngster, the mate tells me that you have \$75 about you."

"Yes, sir," says the boy.

"Hand it over," says the skipper, shortly.

The boy turned white, but he pulled a little canvas bag from his bosom and gave it to the skipper, who counted the money.

"Now this," he says, "won't half pay your passage to Londonderry; but I won't be hard on you. You can go aft, and the steward will give you a berth."

The youngster walked aft without a word, and from that minute until the vessel was off the coast of Ireland he hardly spoke at all; and some of the passengers who didn't know his story said he was going home to die; he drooped, and looked so pale and weak.

It was an awful night that saw us off the shore at Londonderry. A dead lee shore it was then, and the steamer, with a broken shaft, drifting on to it. We could hear the waves breaking near us, and we had passed the light that we should have been makin' for.

The water was far too deep to let go an anchor, even if one could have held, which it couldn't in the gale. Enough head sail had been set to keep the steamer from broachin' to, but all hands saw that as things were goin', she would soon be on the rocks.

Suddenly the skipper started as some one touched him on the shoulder. The youngster was standing beside him.

"I was born on that coast, sir," he said, very slowly, "and I know every rock on it. I know, besides, a channel on the port bow. We'll soon be off it. Shall I take you in?"

"If you think you can," says the skipper, "do. It don't make much difference," he says, turnin' to the mate, "for we are bound to go ashore anyhow. I'll give him the wheel."

The youngster took the wheel and headed her, so at least it seemed to all of us, for where the breakers sounded loudest. The big fellow that helped him was told to do just as the lad ordered him. It was a ticklish time for all hands. But all at once the rocks seemed to open in front, and the steamer ran through a passage not fifty yards across, and in five minutes we were at anchor in smooth water.

The next mornin' the skipper says to his passenger:

"Here's seventy-five dollars that I owe you; and the company will cash this for you, sir, for savin' their ship."

And he gave the youngster an order for five hundred dollars.

There was nothin' proud about the lad. He took the money, paid his mother's rent, and gave her a snug sum for house-keepin'. What became of him? Well, he and I have been shipmates pretty nigh ever since, though he's braved many a knot ahead of me. That's him callin' me now, concluded the boatswain, pressing the fire out of his pipe with his thumb,

and going out on the deck, where the master wanted him to muster the men to Sunday service.

A FIERCE TIGER HUNT.

In March, 1880, I was traveling in India, our party consisting of three ladies and one gentleman. We decided to camp and live quietly, spending our time gathering orchids and other botanical specimens. We therefore pitched our tents in a small clearing on the outskirts of the dense jungle, near a military village in the hill country.

Our Hindoo servants soon made us very much at home. It was wonderful to see how they transported every necessary luxury, and, as by magic, raised tents furnished with carpets, chairs, books, and even a bird cage.

Early one morning as we were lingering over our "chota haziri," or "little breakfast," always taken in India on rising, and speaking of the noises made by the wild animals during the night, my attention was attracted by the great chattering of wild monkeys in the dense jungle close by. At that instant a native came running into the tent in a great state of excitement, salaaming, but waiting for us to speak.

"Kya chahte ho?" (What do you want?) Mr. Norton asked. "Sahib, plenty big tiger near by. Many men see him. He is hiding near the nala."

We held our breath for an instant, then the blood seemed to leap faster through our veins. A tiger so near! The nala, or stream of water, was but ten rods from our tent.

Mr. Norton turned to us. "Ladies, would you like to go on a tiger hunt?"

"Yes, indeed," we quickly answered, "if it is not too dangerous."

"Never fear; we will take good care of you."

A Hindoo doctor from the village hospital rushed up at that moment and confirmed the news in broken English.

"Big baghou he is; much man-eater tiger in jungle. Yesterday one child taken, Sahib, with us."

Immediately we made preparations for the hunt. We put on leather belts, well-filled with cartridges, selected Martini rifles, put on pith hats with turbans over them and moved off to the da wa khana. Here we found a party of sepoy drawn up in line awaiting our arrival. We soon crossed the little stream, where we saw the tiger's tracks in the mud of the bank, looking like the footprints of a giant cat. Breathlessly we moved on toward the deep jungle of tangled bamboos and palms.

Tiger-shooting is carried on in many different ways in India. Sometimes the hunter mounts a great elephant and shoots the savage beast from his howdah, as the native beaters drive the tiger from his grassy lair in the jungle. Where the jungle is very dense and dangerous, so that the tiger may surprise the hunter unaware, the sportsman climbs a tree and waits until the tiger is attracted by the bleating of a goat, purposely tied in a certain place. But at the best, tiger-hunting is risky work, and the hunter takes his life in his hands.

Mr. Norton, who had often shot tigers on foot, took us under his special care. The Hindoo doctor, owing to his knowledge of the jungle, was made the leader of the entire party, and we began our march.

It was a very hot morning. Everything around was parched and withered. The dead leaves under foot were as slippery as glass. The bamboos grew so near together that it was impossible to keep in a direct line. Progress was accordingly slow.

We might have been out three hours, watching every patch of jungle and elephant grass for a sight of the beast we longed to meet, when the wild chattering of a troop of monkeys indicated that the tiger was not far off. What an exciting moment it was. Though the heat was intense and we were very tired, on we went as stealthily as possible, although sometimes falling on the slippery leaves. But the bare feet of our Indian hunters made no noise as they stealthily stole through the dry grass. Heated, breathlessly, on we

went. Another chatter of monkeys, a flutter of bright-winged birds as we stepped into a small grassy space, completely encircled by tall palms, showed us that the tiger was near at hand.

A little in advance of our scouting party of natives was a bit of green jungle, heavy and dark. We could see by the rustling of the grass that it was the hiding place of some great animal. A consultation was hurriedly held. How should we attack him? There was not an instant to be lost. Again the tiger moved, and for a second we saw his yellow coat gleaming through the green.

Our talk was suddenly ended in an unexpected way. A clump of elephant grass at one side was quickly parted. A great flash of yellow bounded toward us, a gleam of blazing eyes made our blood run cold. A tigress—a mate of the royal creature in the jungle—with open mouth leaped suddenly upon us.

Motionless with amazement and horror we stood. Oh, the fearful, cruel face, as she stood lashing her tail from side to side. Her hot breath almost burnt my face, as with outspread claws she made one fierce bound toward me, dashing the sepoy in front to the ground.

I was paralyzed with fear. Surely my last hour had come! But a native sprang between us, the rifles cracked, the hunting-knives gleamed. It was soon a hand-to-hand fight.

One gallant young sepoy lay senseless, blood dripped from the shoulder of another. Still the enraged tigress held her ground, while fear and a horrible fascination riveted us to the spot. Although bleeding from a great wound in the shoulder, the tigress once more made ready to spring.

The ladies were in imminent peril. But the brave Hindoo doctor, knife in hand, plunged almost into the jaws of the tigress in deadly embrace. Over rolled man and beast; sometimes a gleam of blood-stained white showed where our poor defender was writhing; but the great tawny body of the tigress seemed to fill all space. None dared to shoot for the rifle shot might kill the man instead of the beast. Finally—it might have been seconds, but it seemed hours—a brave young sepoy rushed up, knife in hand, his swarthy face under his white turban gleaming with excitement.

"Mem Sahib!" he cried, "My doctor! He saved my wife and child. He must not die today!" and the brave fellow rushed forward into the jaws of death.

His silver-hilted knife, sharp as a Toledo blade, gleamed with lightning rapidity, and it descended just over the heart. The tigress gave one scream that made the jungle re-echo, then lay quiet forever. She had fought bravely for her mate and little ones hidden in the jungle, but against numbers.

The poor doctor, blood-stained and senseless, was drawn away from under the outstretched paw of the dead animal. The other man escaped with only a few scratches, except the brave rescuer, who had a great gash cut in his brown cheek by the enraged tigress.

The splendid creature lay stretched on the ground, her golden brown skin with its velvety black stripes flecked with blood, gleaming in the hot Indian sun. From tip to tip she measured twelve feet. All was joy and excitement, for as we dashed water in the face of the wounded doctor, he opened his eyes and smiled faintly.

"Thank God, the Mem Sahibs are safe!" and we echoed his prayer.

Every one was happy, all the bearers and sepoy were making salaams to us and each other, hardly excepting the dead tigress.

The first tiger had disappeared, nor were the men in condition to fight him. So, after taking the splendid skin from the tigress, for which proof of a tiger's death the British Government gives forty rupees, we returned to our tents, delighted with our first tiger hunt.

The great skin, with its splendid gleam of gold and ebony that would charm an artist's eye, lies under my feet as I write. But I never look at it without a shudder, thinking of the awful day in the jungle when my life hung in the balance, and the brave Hindoo doctor and the gallant sepoy turned the scale in my favor.

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